MASTER AND MEN

WILLIAM BURNET WRIGHT

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By William Burnet Wright

THE HEART OF THE MASTER.

CITIES OF PAUL: Beacons of the Past rekindled for the Present.

ANCIENT CITIES, FROM THE DAWN TO THE DAYLIGHT.

THE WORLD TO COME. Sermons.

MASTER AND MEN: The Sermon on the Mountain Practiced on the Plain.

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
BOSTON AND NEW YORK

MASTER AND MEN

OR

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNTAIN PRACTICED ON THE PLAIN

BY

WILLIAM BURNET WRIGHT

AUTHOR OF "ANCIENT CITIES" AND
"THE WORLD TO COME"

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
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TO

THE RADIANT MEMORY OF THE

HON. VALENTINE BURT CHAMBERLAIN

WHO BY HIS BENEFICENT AND BLESSED LIFE

GAVE TO THE BEATITUDES

AN INTERPRETATION FAR MORE NEARLY ADEQUATE

THIS EXPOSITION

IS WITH REVERENT AFFECTION

DEDICATED BY HIS FRIEND

THE AUTHOR

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	Puzzles	7
II.	A Fertile Source of Puzzles	18
III.	The Change that must come	28
IV.	Blessedness and Power	38
V.	George MacDonald	51
VI.	The Blessedness of Sorrow	73
VII.	St. Paul	82
VIII.	The Inheritance of the Meek	95
IX.	Moses	104
X.	Hunger and Thirst after Righteousness	118
XI.	Socrates	130
XII.	Mercy	146
XIII.	King Alfred	155
XIV.	Seeing God	170
XV.	George Fox	180
XVI.	The Peacemakers	208
XVII.	Charles George Gordon	220

MASTER AND MEN.

I.

PUZZLES.

ALL the nations which call Jesus Christ "Lord! Lord!" have been grouped in a single word, and are known as "Christendom," or "Christ's Kingdom." Other nations are named "Heathen," and collectively "Heathendom."

Some of the most conspicuous characteristics which distinguish Christendom from Heathendom puzzle plain men.

1. When we visit any part of Heathendom, what perhaps impresses us first is the absence of that feverish anxiety for the morrow to which we have become accustomed if our home is in any part of Christendom. In taking thought about what they shall eat, and what they shall drink, and wherewithal they shall be clothed, the Heathen are more like the lilies of the field than are we and our friends. The more the

Heathen yield to our influence the less like the lilies they become. There has probably been more anxiety for the morrow in New York city alone this year — 1893 and 1894 — than has been felt in a generation by the hundreds of millions of Hindoos. Yet it is the acknowledged Master, not of the placid Hindoos, but of the care-worn people in New York, who pointed his disciples to the lilies and the birds.

2. A conspicuous difference between Christendom and Heathendom is the immense superiority of the former in armies and navies and all manner of implements for killing people. The feeblest of Christian nations has ships and guns enough to annihilate the combined military forces of the whole heathen world, excepting only China and Japan. The Chinese Empire, after laboring with England in two hopeless wars and being heavy laden with opium in consequence, came to that Christian nation and found, not "rest to its soul," but such increase of anxiety as set it also to imitating Christendom by building ironclads and casting Krupp guns. The most notable results of the intimate contact of Japan with Christendom are Japanese war ships

and formidable armies. Yet the acknowledged Master and Teacher of Christendom declared he had come, not to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

3. A third distinction of Christian nations is their enormous wealth. The Master said, "How hardly shall they who have riches enter into the kingdom." Yet all the rich nations are in the kingdom, and all the poor ones out of it. This, too, has puzzled many. Henry Heine, the Jew, one of the most sparkling talkers in Europe, sat silent at the banquet till his Christian hostess asked, with some anxiety, "Why are you so dumb?" He answered: "I am studying a problem which I cannot solve. I have been looking at these gold dishes, this fine linen, these splendid waiters, your great diamonds, and wondering what you Christians are going to do with the camel-question."

Mr. Henry M. Stanley stumbled over the same perplexity when he declared that a few millions would open to Africa a future of hope, and said, "But where are the millions to come from, when all the rich men in Europe think of nothing but getting diamonds for their wives?"

4. Observe the immense industrial activity of Christendom. Its subjects toil as Heathen nowhere do for the things that Christ told his disciples not to "labor for," houses and lands and the meat that perisheth. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you," said the Sovereign of Christendom. "But," asks Professor Martineau, "does this ranking of human affairs — first spiritual good, then temporal necessities — describe the actual order of our prevalent pursuits, or even the arrangements of our habitual convictions? Carry the precept in your memory, as you walk the city, musing on the *contents* of that hum of voices. Take it to the dock-side, as you listen to the roll of traffic, and think of the history of all its wealth. Recall it in the mill, as you reflect to what end it is that all the giant mechanism heaves and whirls incessantly. If all this, it may well occur to you, is for the things that '*are added unto men*' with scarce a thought of theirs, how transcendently strenuous must be their primary pursuit, to which this is but a trustful leisure!"

Note, too, what things we are really proud

of having done. Place Ruth's sickle by the side of Mr. McCormick's reaper. Have we not reason to boast of our achievements? But if Ruth herself had appeared among the lady managers of a World's Fair in our day, would our superiority in that branch of manufacture in which our Master told us to engage first appear so triumphant? Does Christendom think McCormick reapers the intended goal of its endeavors? Is it Ruth, or only her sickle, we have been able to improve? We are told that if all productive industries ceased, if farmers stopped planting, and miners stopped mining, and factories stopped working, the world's accumulated wealth would be exhausted in seven years. If that is true, all these things for which the people of Christendom labor so unceasingly appear to be perishable. But our recognized King said labor *not* for such.

5. Among all the conspicuous and panting institutions of Christendom, — its armies, navies, factories, political organizations; its lovely human fellowships, Masons, Odd Fellows, Knights of this and that; its Grand Army of the Republic, — among all these the Church of Christ has come to be

regarded as a sort of bathing house upon the beach, into which seemly men may step to change their clothes before they plunge into eternity; or as a manufactory of loin-cloths for those who came naked into this world and are in danger of having to go naked out of it. Yet the King of Christendom said quite distinctly of his church that it should dominate society in this world, and a singularly perplexing fact is, that whenever the church has appeared to do so in any recognized way, it has ceased to be his church at all, and matters have gone worse with it than at other times. When Emperor Constantine made himself the head of the church and put the cross upon his banners, the commands of Christ were speedily forgotten and gross darkness began to cover the earth. When Rome under Leo X., and Moscow under no one cares whom, imitated Constantine, the results were similar.

6. Then, too, there is a firm tradition that peace and good will and mutual helpfulness should prevail throughout Christendom, and radiate from it to the ends of the earth, because the King said that he died for the whole world; and that all men were brothers

and must love one another as children of the same Father.

But if the inhabitants of Antioch were brought again to life, and given seats where they could hear the debates conducted in the German Reichstag, the French Assembly, the English Parliament, the United States Congress; if they attended the sessions of labor unions or the conferences of capitalists; if they visited the meetings of Presbyterian General Assemblies, or Convocations for the promotion of church union; if they read the reports in the daily papers of what the inhabitants of Christendom are doing and planning, they would scarcely be moved to exclaim, "How these Christians love one another!" The way in which St. Paul withstood St. Peter, "because he was to be blamed," does not seem to be the pattern after which Mr. Debs and Mr. Pullman adjust their divergent views.

The manner in which the gospel of Christ is proclaimed by Christendom to all nations is peculiar. The benediction has not yet been pronounced after the sermon France has been preaching through the lips of cannon to Siam. China has heard the same gospel from America requiring her to turn the other cheek

for Americans to smite. India sees the Christian sacrament in the crumbs that fall from the table of Dives while she lies at the gates with no dogs to lick her sores; and Africa hears with complete docility the exhortation of Christendom, "Be not filled with the spirit, but be ye drunk with rum wherein is excess." In view of these facts there are those who do not feel surprised that Christendom has begun to experience "hard times;" who think that every pang we feel, every disappointment we experience, every anxiety we suffer, every groan we make, is a mouth confessing that Christ is King; that his words are true; that what he commanded will have to be done; that there is no other way from ultimate perdition save the one he pointed out. There are some, in short, who feel that what Christendom chiefly needs is not new tariffs, nor a gold standard, — important as these may be, — but *Christianity;* and that there is nothing about which Christendom is more in doubt than as to what Christianity is. Some openly affirm that we who compose Christendom are not Christians at all.

II. But as I ponder the words of those who are convinced of that last proposition,

the problem grows more puzzling. For of the men who have in our day insisted most uncompromisingly that Jesus Christ meant exactly what to them he seems to have said, the ablest have ended as follows: Thomas Carlyle, after spending a generation in scolding us all as Scribes and Pharisees, went out in night; Count Leon Tolstoi, after giving the strongest evidence a man can give of sincerity and unselfish loyalty to Jesus Christ, takes to writing Kreutzer Sonatas, and such like; John Ruskin, lovelier than either of them, and more gifted both in powers of insight and of loyalty, has, for his own safety, it is reported, to be treated as a man of shattered nerves.

But the Master said, "By their fruits ye shall know them." And the fruits of true discipleship, the result of coming to him and taking his yoke upon one, he declared to be "rest to one's soul," and not by any means a temper which makes one a torment to his wife; nor visions that set one to writing Kreutzer Sonatas and horrible stories about horrible women who cannot help preferring other peoples' husbands to their own; nor a restlessness that drives one to retreats for shattered nerves.

Thus those who tell us we must not make money seem to have understood Christ little better than those who, by their example, tell us we should do nothing but make money, for they seem to come equally short of the end the Master promised his disciples.

III. There is still another perplexity. In view of what has been said above, it does not seem surprising that when we send missionaries to pagan lands, or even when we set apart men to preach to ourselves, we should not be quite sure what they ought to say. This uncertainty has for some years kept the great mother of American Missions in partial paralysis, and is seriously interfering with distinctness of enunciation in many who preach at home.

If you have felt none of the perplexities of which I have named a few, the following pages can bring you small interest and no profit. But if you feel that there is much in our Lord's teaching which we have as yet failed to master, not because he speaks indistinctly, but because he sits so high above us that we must listen intently and watch his gestures as we try to catch his words, asking each other, "Did he say thus or so?" — I invite you to read a little farther. For the chapters before you are an

honest endeavor to understand those words of our Lord in which he himself expounded Christianity.

I have read many books. I have listened to many teachers. I have often felt that the world was a tangled jungle in which my guides had lost their way. I have had many friends, of whom, some could not help me when they would, a few would not help me when they could. But of all teachers dead or living, of all friends visible or invisible, not excepting Paul among the departed and those who are dearest to me among the living, none has ever helped me to find sight for my mind or rest for my spirit except in such proportion as he has helped me to understand and to obey the Sermon on the Mount. I believe it contains the true solution of every problem which has troubled mankind in the past or troubles men in the present; the key to every perplexity; the weapon against every danger; the balm for every wound; the assurance against every anxiety which any man can meet. With this conviction I venture to ask you to read with me the first twelve verses which form the text of which the later words of that sermon are applications to the multifarious experiences of life.

II.

A FERTILE SOURCE OF PUZZLES.

While reading the New Testament we need to keep on guard against a trick our senses play upon us. The trick is transparent while we are on our guard against it, yet it has produced incalculable confusion in Christian teaching. The trick is this: —

The Gospels are printed at the beginning of the New Testament. The Sermon on the Mount was preached before any of the Epistles were penned. We assume, therefore, — though most of us know better, — that the Gospels, especially the Sermon which is their centre, were written and circulated before the other parts of the New Testament appeared; and that this is the order in which Christianity was revealed to the world and in which it should be taught to every person. We fancy that the Epistles, particularly those of Paul, were supplements added to explain and perfect the Gospels.

This assumption, consciously or uncon-

sciously made, has muddled Christian theology for centuries. Teachers have treated the Epistles as inspired commentaries upon the Gospels. Most systems of Christian theology have been built upon that assumption. But the assumption is accurately the reverse of true.

The Epistles were the earlier, the Gospels the later writings. Before a farmer plants he clears the ground. Paul's Epistles were mainly occupied in removing the rubbish of Jewish and Gentile prejudices to prepare for the Gospels. The chief reason why they are hard for us to understand is that we do not feel the difficulties they were written to remove, nor even appreciate what those difficulties were. Paul did his work so effectually that in many cases no traces of them remain.

When the churches had pondered the Epistles for a considerable time, they received the Sermon on the Mount. By it they were to correct the misunderstandings, solve the perplexities, complete the partial information, with which the Epistles had left them.

Theologians have reversed this order. They have put the cart before the horse. They have tried to unlock the key with the

door, instead of unlocking the door with the key; to interpret that which is plain by that which is obscure. This is the fertile cause of most of those absurdities to some of which the last chapter pointed. This is the ultimate reason why Calvin burned Servetus, and the General Assembly excommunicated Dr. Smith.

This is a fact so important that it needs to be emphasized. The Gospels are the last steps of the inspired revelation. Everything else in the New Testament is to be interpreted by them. The Epistles are not the authorized commentaries on the Gospels. The Gospels are the authorized commentaries on the Epistles. The Epistles do not supplement the Gospels. The Gospels supplement the Epistles. If there is anything in Romans which we cannot reconcile with John, it is not Romans by which we must try to interpret John, but John is the key to Romans. If we cannot harmonize the two, then, be sure, it is Romans, not John, we have misunderstood, and therefore must not be swift to preach.

If this principle had been strictly observed, there would have been no religious wars, no persecutions, no inquisition, in

Christendom. There would have arisen no Roman church, no Greek church, no Protestant churches. For there has been no religious war, no religious schism, which did not come from quarreling over some debatable inference from the Epistles, and which was not in direct disobedience of some precept plainly stated in the Sermon on the Mount. If one-fourth part the energy which has been expended in trying to make men assent to human deductions from Paul's Epistles had been steadily exerted in pressing the Sermon on the Mount upon the conscience of mankind, it may be questioned whether there would be to-day an unbelieving person within, or a pagan nation without, the bounds of Christendom.

The current religious discussions and most of the so-called infidelity which alarm timid Christians are radiant signs that Christendom is slowly, unconsciously, but surely learning that its ultimate teacher is not St. Paul, but Jesus Christ.

With this warning, ponder for a few moments these words of Matthew: "Seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: and he opened his mouth, and taught them."

"Disciples" cannot mean the twelve apostles. For when Christ had finished the Sermon it was the multitudes who were astonished at his teaching, and therefore they must have heard those teachings. I think a being who saw not only the outward appearance, but the hidden forces of life, could find no words fitter to depict the present state of Christendom than these: "Seeing the multitudes he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: and he opened his mouth, and taught them."

"Seeing the multitudes." It was not the beginning of Christ's ministry. He had worked for many months patiently, for the most part in humble places, living the sermon he was now to preach. It was not extemporized. Every syllable he had already written down in deeds. He has only to translate his life into language. The Beatitudes are his autobiography.

He had been loved by many, worshiped by a few, hated by more, misunderstood by all. But he could not be hid, and he had become the most conspicuous personality in the land. All men and women who had seen and heard him had been forced to feel

that their own lives were or would be influenced by this man. Some saw in him a physician, some a teacher, some a politician, some a prophet, some an enemy, some a saviour. Endless reports about him filled the air. Some of them were true, more of them were false. Therefore a great multitude had assembled. Some to see, some to hear, some to learn, some to criticise, some to be healed, some because others came. None yet knew him as he was. Few knew him at all.

The same facts are true in Christendom to-day. There is no language in which Christ has not been named. There is no people among whom curiosity about him has not arisen. In nominally Christian lands he is the central object of attention. For eighteen centuries some have reviled, some have loved, some have fought, some have worshiped; a few have deeply known him. Immense atrocities have been committed in his name, boundless benevolences have been inspired by his spirit. Men have lived for Christ, died for Christ, crowned him, crucified him, rejoiced in the thought of his presence as Mary did; been tormented by the thought of his presence as the demoniac

were; men have sought him, fled from him, prayed to him, cursed him, done to him everything except put him out of sight and mind. That they have not been able to do, hard as they have tried to do it. Now, at last, men are "coming to him," that they may learn from his own lips who he is and what he says. They will rest no longer in what you or I or any other man may say about him. They will not be satisfied with hearing what Isaiah predicted or Paul affirmed of him. They insist on knowing what Jesus Christ himself said and did. The Bible is valued only as the revealer of him. The person of Christ is fast becoming both centre and circumference of Christian thought.

"He went up into a mountain." Christ began to teach in a synagogue. Next he appeared in the temple. Now he stands under God's sky.

So is it to-day! He is no longer imprisoned in any church or sect. Once to hear a word of his, you would have been obliged to enter some consecrated edifice or seek some ordained ecclesiastic. Now every man may have in his own hand the full report of all that Jesus Christ is known to have said

or done. His words are being read through microscopes, weighed in balances, fused in crucibles, by experts whose only desire is to prove them true; by experts whose only desire is to prove them false; by experts whose only desire is to make sure whether they are true or false.

All men see clearly now that the salvation of the Jewish nation depended upon its believing, understanding, and obeying Christ. The Jews disbelieved, misunderstood, and disobeyed him. Their ruin followed fast.

The fate of Christendom appears to hang in the same balances. The socialism of today teaches by its great thinkers, and repeats by its little ones, that Jesus Christ requires community of goods; that we may not hold property in severalty; that the rich must renounce their wealth. If mankind becomes convinced that Jesus Christ so taught; that his parables of the Laborers and of Dives, his direction to the young man who was goodly and his words about the needle's eye, his saying, "Blessed are ye poor," mean *that*, the existing relations of modern society will be destroyed. The combined wealth and culture of Christendom will be unable to

resist any movement pushed by a universal conviction that it is fulfilling the will of Christ.

The weakness of the socialism planted by Rousseau, watered by Voltaire, and consumed in the French Revolution, was that it called Christ "Le Scélérat." The strength of the socialism of to-day is that it fights in his name.

For this reason it is wise not only for those who care for their souls, but for those also who think only of their pockets, to come to the mountain and give heed to his words.

"And when he was set," — as he sits now, in the light of day, before the sight of all men, upon a mountain above all other teachers, — "his disciples came unto him" (mind, they had to come); "and he taught them."

He began his ministry at Nazareth, by opening the Scriptures and showing what they taught. He continued his ministry in Galilee by opening nature and showing what it taught; speaking in parables, and so revealing things hid from the foundation of the world.

In the Sermon on the Mount he opens neither Scriptures nor nature as the source

of authority. He opens his own mouth. His hearers were astonished because he spoke as one having authority. He defended his statements by no quotations. He spoke as he might have spoken had there been no "Moses and the prophets." It was not "I think!" but "I say!" When his words contradicted convictions derived by his hearers from the Scriptures, he did not spend a moment in attempts to reconcile his statements with any other statements. He simply declared, "I say thus!" "It is so!" Ye have heard it has been said by them of olden time, "Thou shalt not kill," but "I say unto you" thus and so.

Then, lest any should fancy he gave them license to commit the sins which Moses had forbidden, he exclaimed, "Think not I am come to destroy the law and the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill."

But he accepts no jury save the consciences of his hearers. He calls them to believe the things he says because those things are true. They are not true because he says them. He says them because they are true. He challenges contradiction. But contradiction is impossible because every hearer's heart and experience declare that they are true

III.

THE CHANGE THAT MUST COME.

In the year 30 A. D. the social, industrial, political, and religious conditions of the Jewish people were fast becoming intolerable. Those conditions were by no means a miniature of our own, but they were nearly such as the fault-finders who are most dissatisfied with the present state of Christendom declare our state to be. There are, for example, labor agitators who affirm that capitalists have combined to enslave employees. This is not true to-day. It was substantially true of Palestine in the year 30. There are employers who say it is useless to treat workingmen as rational creatures. The statement is not true. But it was nearly true of Palestine in the year 30. The Ravachols, the Vaillants, the Emma Goldmans bring certain charges against all existing governments and laws. Those charges are conspicuously false. They would have been little short of true if urged in Palestine during the year

30. For this reason we have only to hear what Jesus Christ said to his contemporaries in order to learn what he would say to the reformers of our own time, even if the most malignant accusations made against society to-day were true.

A swift glance over Palestine will make this plain.

1. Like many of the fiercest conflicts in history the French Revolution was largely caused by exorbitant taxation. A careful scholar tells us that of every $13 earned by the French peasant, $11 were taken from him in taxes. We have not the figures for Palestine. But the taxes there were fixed and farmed with less justice than in France. A single illustration will show what was going on in all departments of industry. The government revenues from the palm groves of Jericho had been given by a licentious Roman usurper to an Egyptian harlot. The industry was not a large one. Yet the Egyptian sold for a great sum the right of taxing it to a speculator who was able to recoup himself for his outlay and still grow rich, because it was in his power to determine the tax, and the Roman army supported him in collecting the revenues. This is a specimen

of what occurred in other branches of industry, and this was the cause which made "publican," or "tax-gatherer," the most odious word in the Gospels.

2. Enormous fortunes, usually obtained by fraud and lavished in ostentatious luxury, rose like islands in a sea of surging, choking poverty.

3. Ring rule was universal. There was no way of escaping it, for there were no popular elections. The political "bosses" were appointed at Rome, by favor of Tiberius, and in the presence of Tiberius the hero of Gravesend would seem saintly and the Sachems of Tammany scrupulous.

4. There was no religious liberty. To think was to risk life.

5. The Sabbath had been made a day of grievous oppression for the poor, of pampering self-indulgence for the rich.

6. Multitudes were unemployed. The labor market was glutted. Christ has left us a picture of the many willing hands standing all day idle in the market place because no man would hire them.

7. There was a panic among Orthodox Jews not unlike that represented by the American Protective Association, except that

instead of being inspired by a silly phantom, it was generated by appalling facts. The Jews had abundant cause to fear that the Romans would take away their laws, their religion, and their country.

Thus the piety, the patriotism, and the pockets of the Jews had been outraged. But their passions had not been numbed. Therefore, revolution of some sort was certain. The gunpowder waited only for the spark.

The more desperate and courageous spirits had taken to robbery and murder. They infested many parts of Palestine more thickly than bandits infested Naples before Garibaldi's victories. The common people considered these robber chiefs, of whom Barabbas was one, their best patriots and safest friends.

To a people thus goaded to desperation, Jesus Christ appeared. They did not see in him, as we do, simply or mainly, a religious leader, teacher, saviour. They regarded him as a social and political reformer. The poor hailed him as the French welcomed Mirabeau; as the English farmers turned to Joseph Arch; as the London dockmen regard Mr. Burns; as many American workingmen have received Mr. Powderly; as

many of all classes have regarded Henry George. But the confidence reposed in the new leader by the people of Palestine was greater than can be felt in any reformer of our time, because all Jews believed that when their deliverer came he would wield the powers of the Almighty.

Jesus Christ appeared to the people as the leader in that revolution which all knew to be inevitable. In the Sermon on the Mount he accepted the position and published his platform. Notice two facts.

(1.) The revolution came soon. It failed utterly and hopelessly. It caused a ruin worse than the cancer it tried to cure. It effaced the national life.

(2.) The revolution which failed — failed utterly and hopelessly — followed a course accurately the opposite in every respect to the course prescribed by Jesus Christ.

In the Sermon on the Mount Christ opened that breach with the ruling classes which ended in their crucifying him; that breach with the populace which ended in their turning from him to Barabbas.

The Beatitudes are the text of the whole discourse. In them he told the people that, terrible as their situation was, what they

needed most and what they needed first was a change, not in their circumstances, but in themselves. Blessedness, he affirmed, comes not from outward conditions, but from inward states. It consists not in positions, but in dispositions. Therefore the first business of a reformer is not to make rich men poor or poor men rich, but to persuade rich men to use their riches and poor men to use their poverty as both classes know they ought to do.

He had profoundest sympathy with all. He knew how workingmen felt, for he was one of them, and had worked for years at the carpenter's bench. He knew the experiences of the poor, for he had not where to lay his head. He knew how honest men felt amid the general hypocrisy, for the zeal of his father's house had eaten him up. He knew how the tired, anxious people felt, for he had often called them and offered them rest. He knew how all suffered, and why they suffered. He pitied them as God pities us. Therefore he told them, "It is not your circumstances that are intolerable, it is you who are intolerable; you are oppressed, you are miserable, you are despairing, because you who are rich think only of yourselves,

and you who are poor are trying to mend matters by copying the example of the rich and thinking only of yourselves."

"Blessed are the poor in spirit," whether they are rich or poor in pocket. "Blessed are they that mourn," whether they be oppressed or free; bereaved, or with their children about them.

His hearers knew that Christ's words were true. We know that they are true. But — we see David, a lonely shepherd boy, with nothing but his lyre, his staff, his courage, and his God; slighted by his family, owning not even those few sheep "he watched in the wilderness," we hear him singing: "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters. . . . Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life."

We see the same David a king, rich, popular, possessing (as we say in our folly) "all that heart can wish." We hear him groaning: "Have mercy upon me, O Lord, and blot out my transgressions." "All night long make I my bed to swim." With these pictures before us we still fancy: "How happy I should have been if only that oil well had

been discovered before I sold the land in which it flows!"

We all see that Christ's words are true of others. We forget that they are true of ourselves. The miners of Colorado were in want because the mines shut down. The employers said to them, "For months and years you earned from three to five dollars a day. But you did not save a cent." That is, "You yourselves need to be changed."

The mine owners were sorely troubled because their men threatened strikes, robbery, and murder. Unprejudiced observers said: "You mine owners have had these men in charge for years. You have lifted no finger to make them intelligent, or teach them thrift. It is you who need to change." Both teach unconsciously Christ's doctrine of the new birth.

American citizenship is imperiled. Unscrupulous politicians control our elections. What will the end be if these men are not suppressed? But truth declares that we ourselves have been recreant to our trust. We have cared for ourselves, not our country, and therefore we are in trouble. It is we who need to change! Listen again, O Nicodemus!

Reader, were you not happier when, a little child, you had only faith, hope, and perhaps a broom-stick for a horse, than a racing steed with millions of money can make you now? Ponder that fact, Nicodemus!

Other reformers have stood upon the practical denial of this fact with which Christ began. Like Mr. Bellamy they hope to build a palace that will endure with squares of punk for stones; to construct a stable and happy community from persons who are selfish, weak, and miserable. Their first cry is: "Get your circumstances changed." Christ's first call was: "Get yourselves changed, and the things that stand around you will be changed." When the torch is lighted, even the dark crystals in the cavern will sparkle.

Though every one of the Beatitudes is true, and demonstrably true to any man who will test it by obedience, there is not one of them which does not flatly contradict some generally received maxim of worldly wisdom. This is not equally obvious of them all because the meaning of some of them has been obscured. But consider the words, "Blessed are they that mourn." Do

we put crape upon our doors to advertise our blessedness?

"Blessed are the peace-makers." But it is the war-makers for whom the columns have been reared and the laurels wreathed.

Therefore it is that Christ reiterated, "You must change your mind; you must think as I do. There is no other way into peace, joy, blessedness. Except ye repent ye cannot see the kingdom of God."

For the Beatitudes are not arbitrary enactments. God himself cannot change them. While a man hates his brother God cannot make him happy. Omnipotence cannot give us peace while we hug the worm that does not die and wrap ourselves in the flame that is not quenched.

This, then, is Christianity. Christ began his reformation, not by changing circumstances, but by changing the men who make circumstances. All things will be right when we are right. Are we acquiring dispositions which make us masters of circumstances? If yea, we are Christians. If nay, we are not.

IV.

BLESSEDNESS AND POWER.

If the discontented, anxious, and angry men who inaugurated the Pullman Railroad strike had before beginning their futile struggle assembled to receive the instructions of their most trusted leader; if he had placed before them a little child and told them they would never get what they sought unless they became like it; or if the company of somewhat unduly excited divines who assembled at Washington, in the spring of 1893, to purge their church of heresy, had seen the moderator of their assembly introduce its deliberations by doing the same thing, neither American Railway Unionist nor Presbyterian doctor of divinity would, I think, have been more surprised than were most of those who expected Christ to lead them in establishing the kingdom for which they looked, when they heard him say: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." In those

words he told them they could never obtain what they desired by the means in which they trusted, but must use others as different as sunbeams are from lightning. For happiness and victory in this world could not be won by pride, suspicion, and hate, but only by humble-heartedness, trust, and love.

When our Lord had named the seven pillars upon which human society rests, he repeated the promise of this first Beatitude, so affirming it to be the final reward of those whom persecutions could not move from the foundations he had laid; as if he meant us to mind it last as well as first.

This first Beatitude is to the other six almost as the trunk of a tree is to its branches; perhaps it would be more accurate to say, as the soil is to the plants it feeds.

Whom, then, did the Master mean by the poor in spirit to whom the kingdom belongs?

Not those who are rightly called "poor spirited." There ought to be no need of saying that, but there is, for some may still be found who consider crawling the Christian's proper gait.

There are men who fear to call their souls

their own, and if they did, they would deceive — themselves. At times such men baptize their cowardice in holy water, name it humility, and tremble lest the spirit of God shall baptize them with fire. We call them "poor spirited." They are not blessed. Their life is a creeping paralysis. Afraid to stand for their convictions, they end by having no convictions to stand to. They never draw upon themselves persecutions for righteousness sake, as the children of the kingdom are said to do, but they are tortured from within. Others despise them, and in their least ignoble moments they despise themselves. Polonius sees only what he thinks the Prince would have him see, be it cloud, camel, or weasel's back. In politics he is a demagogue; in society, a time-server; in religion, a heretic or a pillar of Orthodoxy according to his calculation of who "rules" or is like to rule "in Denmark."

But whatever a Christian may lack, he must be brave. "Fear not! Fear not!" is the bugle-call of Christ.

To whom, then, did the Master point the troubled, anxious, or angry men who wished to take him by force and make him king,

and who had come to learn of him the things belonging to their peace?

We are not left to conjecture. He deemed his meaning so important that, though he repeated it in many and varied forms of utterance, he did not trust it to the precarious vehicle of words alone, but gave an illustration which signifies to us precisely what it signified to those who saw him give it.

When the disciples asked Jesus who was greatest in the kingdom of heaven, he set a little child in the midst of them, and said, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

When they disputed who should be greatest in the kingdom, he pointed them to a little child. Of such, he told them, was the kingdom, and none could enter it but such as had the child's spirit.

By the "poor in spirit," therefore, I understand our Lord to mean those who retain the spirit of little children, for little children are they of whom he said, "of such is the kingdom," in which they who are most childlike are greatest.

Childlike men are the antipodes of the

crawling creatures we call "poor spirited;" the men of expediencies and policies, who are sharp-eyed along the low horizons of earth; who walk by street lamps, and never steer by the stars.

For little children never think of policy They do not know what expediency means They say what they think. They are utterly fearless. We may easily make them cowards. But that is our work, and in proportion as we make them timid we make them unchildlike.

I. The little child, who, Christ said, needs no change to fit him for the kingdom, is blessed. There are unchildlike children. We often make them so in trying to make them religious, because we forget that it is not they who need to become like us, but we who need to become like them. There are small Pharisees in bibs and pinafores as full of worldliness as we are. There are few sadder sights than such. But genuine children are the blessed ones of earth. They may weep, but their tears contain no poison and leave no blight.

"The tear down childhood's cheek that flows
Is like the dewdrop on the rose.
When next the summer breeze comes by
And shakes the bush, the flower is dry."

Because he is humble-hearted the child finds joy in the least things as in the greatest. From a daisy, a kitten, or the shine of a star he will draw more gladness than we can gather from possession of a gold mine. He feels no anxiety for the morrow. Though he cannot put into words the writings of God which Christ translated from the leaves of flowers and the wings of birds, he absorbs their true significance, and understands that while he is obedient some one will take care of him, so that he has need to be careful for nothing but his duty. He has only to obey and trust.

That so many look back to their childhood as Eve looked back to Paradise is the witness of experience to the truth, "Blessed are the poor in spirit;" the evidence that we have tasted, and in our folly thrown away, that fruit of the tree of life upon which our Master fed continually.

II. Little children are in the kingdom of heaven. They eat of the tree of knowledge and enter deeper into paradise; we eat and are cast out; we find much study a weariness to the flesh, because we study and accumulate to surpass others, or to gain repute of learning. Ambitions, rivalries,

jealousies, attack our spirits as measles once attacked our bodies, and, unlike such physical diseases, are surer to return when once they have afflicted us. These soul sicknesses have taken us out of paradise. For

> " . . . trailing clouds of glory do we come
> From God who is our home:
> Heaven lies about us in our infancy."

But the world does not believe this. We do not strive to cultivate in our own souls the spirit of childhood. We try to make the children like ourselves, and earth becomes so much like pandemonium because we succeed so well.

Not only are the children in the kingdom, but we know that they are in it. We show that we know it by the efforts which, with strange and blessed inconsistency, we make to keep them there.

We expect children to obey the Sermon on the Mount. We try to help them do so. We do not think of obeying it ourselves, and we do not expect other grown people to try. If when Charlie has an orange, he devours all the pulp and gives his sister only the peel, we are distressed. We feel instinctively that children ought not so to do, and we are not satisfied until we have made

Charlie agree with us. When Mr. Blank appropriates to himself all the gold of the mine and leaves the slack alone for his brothers, we feel differently about his conduct. It is what we expect him to do, and would do ourselves if we could. If Charlie and Johnnie quarrel over marbles, if Charlie strikes, and Johnnie hits back, we are shocked and grow eloquent with the history of Cain and Abel. But when workingmen strike, and employers lock them out, that is what we expect. This is a roundabout way of expressing our conviction that Charlie and Johnnie are in the kingdom and therefore ought to obey its laws. But just what kind of kingdom the rest of us are in, and to what king we think we owe allegiance, it might disturb us to inquire.

But "theirs is the kingdom" means not only that childlike persons, the poor in spirit, are in the kingdom, but that the kingdom belongs to them. In it they are regnant. Their weapons are the weapons of victory, their sceptre the sceptre of might.

More than any others among us the child wields the power of God. He rules as Christ rules. He controls as Christ controls. Like Christ he is omnipotent, because like Christ he rules by love. This fact,

which is always before our eyes, we continually overlook. We look for some millennial future, when the child shall lead the lion. We fail to see that he does it now. For little children are God's police, God's magistrates, God's soldiers. By their presence demoniacs are tortured and other men compelled by a power they cannot resist to do God's work in God's ways.

This young girl is cruel with the cruelty born of self-indulgence. Her own enjoyment is her sole pursuit. Her life is a round of parties, balls, and theatres. Father and mother she leaves alone to the dreary solitude of age. When friends remonstrate, she laughs a wicked little laugh, and ties a fresh ribbon in her hair. She may sink lower yet, — low enough to feel the policeman's hand upon her shoulder, to find herself restrained by prison bars. Such things have been. The unslaked thirst for pleasure throngs her pulses with the torments of Dives. All the powers of earth cannot force her to repent. At last God — it may be by the hand of shame; such things have been — lays a baby on her breast. By its soft breath self is slain, as all the enemies of Christ shall yet be blasted by the breath of his nostrils. The

trustful eyes say, "Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more." The soft hands mould her into a new creature; make her as Christ is. She not only gives her life for her little one, but can say truly as her Saviour said: "This is my joy; to lay down my life for" the one "Thou hast given me."

The child rules her by love, and to be ruled by love is the law, the life-law of the kingdom. For there is no night so dark that love cannot throng its sky with stars. There are no duties so loathsome that love cannot make them sweet. A year ago the delicate lady could not force herself to pass an hour in a sick-room. To-day she kisses the blistered lips, and makes her bosom a couch for diphtheria.

What is the power of guns and armies compared to this? Against selfish human hearts, they are as thistledown to Gibraltar. God puts little children in the midst of us, and they not only make us obey his laws, they make us love to obey them.

If all the soldiers who have lived on the earth besieged the city in which we live; if their commander ordered us to love him, to toil for him day and night; not only that, but to choose his service, to desire it more

than meat, the guns might make us serve him, they could not make us love to serve him. God puts little children in our cradles; we yield at once. It is not presidents nor kings that rule us. The little children are our sovereigns. Until we, too, learn to influence by love's might, we have no place in the kingdom.

For nineteen centuries the blunder of the first disciples has been perpetuated. Many who think themselves Christians cling to it still. They interpret the metaphors in the Apocalypse as literal predictions, and prate of a second coming of Christ, — a coming with swords and spears. They say he will return, no longer Christ, but shorn of every ray of his true glory, in the pitiful pomp of Cæsar, as if he had discovered the falsity of the facts he preached; as if he had taken the dull, rusted, and oft-rejected sword of which he said they who took it should perish with it, and consented at last to accept the terms of those who would have no king but Cæsar.

But still the same awful gentleness is among us, saying, "Not by fire drawn by Elijah's prayer to consume as the soldiers of Ahaziah were consumed, but by the fire

drawn in answer to the petition, "Father, forgive them," shall the kingdom come in which they are greatest who are most like childlike children.

We say that the spirit of love and trust is impotent to cope with the troubles of our time; we lose heart and hope because even while we try to do our duty we have lost the child's trust which says, "My Father," and feels that his arms surround us.

But the times are not so troubled nor the tumult so tumultuous as they were when the Master spake. In him the Spirit which proved him the Eternal Son of God shone brightest when the fight seemed fiercest. For when John was in prison and his disciples afraid; when our Lord heard the men he came to save calling him "gluttonous and a wine-bibber," and saw the cities he loved rushing toward a ruin more awful than that in which Sodom was destroyed, "at that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. . . . My yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

As he neared the cross in which others saw the destruction of all his hopes, he told the disciples that his joy was full, and prayed that they might share that joy.

By being "lifted up" he began to draw all men unto him.

> His burden was light,
> His joy was full,
> His power omnipotent,

because in him were always, and in perfection, those qualities of which the germs appear in uncorrupted children, — those qualities which feel: "I can of mine own self do nothing. The Father which dwelleth in me, He doeth the works." "Not alone, because the Father is with me." "I do always the things that please Him."

V.

GEORGE MACDONALD.

After a morning in St. Peter's, I asked each of the friends who had been with me there to estimate from memory the size of the marble cherubs beneath the font. One replied, "They are as large as a six months' child." No one thought them larger than a child of two years.

They are larger than full-grown men, but their proportions are so perfect, the cathedral is so immense, that every eye had been deceived.

There are men who would appear greater if they were not so great. Because it has small breadth Cleopatra's Needle seen alone impresses one as taller than a pyramid. Mirabeau appears colossal because he was great in only one direction. We use unconsciously the inferior parts of a man to measure whatever in him may be surpassingly excellent. For this reason the courage of a corsair is often more impressive

than the heroism of a Joshua. In Christ there is no disproportion, no imperfection, to help us appreciate his grandeur. It may help us, therefore, to see our Saviour more nearly as he is, if we look at each of those qualities which he manifested in perfection, as it shines obscurely through some one of his disciples. With this purpose I have attached to each of the Beatitudes the sketch of a character which seems to me to furnish an illustration of its truth.

During the summer of 1867, Miss Charlotte Cushman wrote from a small fishing village on the English coast, "We saw MacDonald, who is living in a cottage here, with hosts of children, cross over the breakwater when the tide was just beginning to creep over it. He carried one baby in his arms, led another by the hand, and a third toddler held on by the second. We watched the procession breathlessly, as you may imagine. They arrived safely at the other end, where the breakwater ends in a high mass of rock. Now the question arose whether they would attempt the return, for every moment the tide washed heavier over and between the huge stones of the breakwater. Presently back they came, almost blinded by the spray

and foam, but full of courage and pluck, not one of them thinking or betraying the least sign of fear. The baby crowed aloud with delight. MacDonald came to see me afterwards. 'It does them good,' he said. 'They like it.'"

It did him good. He liked it. But most of all it has done us good. For experiences like this taught him to translate into words a mother's kiss by singing the sweetest lullaby in our language: —

"Where did you come from, baby dear?
Out of the everywhere into here.

"Where did you get your eyes so blue?
Out of the sky as I came through.

"What makes the light in them sparkle and spin?
Some of the starry spikes left in.

"Where did you get that little tear?
I found it waiting when I got here.

"What makes your forehead so smooth and high?
A soft hand stroked it as I went by.

"What makes your cheek like a warm white rose?
I saw something better than any one knows.

"Whence that three-cornered smile of bliss?
Three angels gave me at once a kiss.

"Where did you get this pearly ear?
God spake and it came out to hear.

"Where did you get those arms and hands?
Love made itself into hooks and bands.

"Feet, whence did you come, you darling things?
From the same box as the cherub wings.

"How did they all just come to be you?
God thought about me and so I grew.

"But how did you come to us, you dear?
God thought about you, and so I am here."

For the last twenty years there has been no other book except the Bible which I have put so often into the hands of friends whom bereavement, sickness, or failure had robbed of their courage, hope, and faith as that child's story, "At the Back of the North Wind," from which I have quoted the poem. There is no other which I have found so helpful in reviving the faith, hope, and courage which give strength for the battles they had to fight.

The little book has appeared to make such readers feel in some degree as I think others like them long ago were made to feel by hearing the Master when he took little children in his arms and blessed them, and said,

"Suffer little children and forbid them not to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Some years after Miss Cushman had watched him by the sea, the papers announced that George MacDonald would preach the next Sunday evening at a certain church in Anerley, one of the suburbs of London.

Though he is an ordained minister, the papers did not call him "Reverend," and we must not, for he has forbidden us to do so. He has renounced the title, "because," as he explained to a friend, "I can speak with more effect to laymen as one of themselves. I am only a lay member of the Church of England. If any one wants to hear me I am glad to tell them what I believe just because I believe it."

He never accepts a penny for preaching. Yet unless prevented by sickness or accident, he preaches every Sunday in the year.

The train approaching Anerley was crowded. When the procession from the cars reached the church, carriages, some of them with footmen in livery, blocked the street. Half an hour before the services began the large building was packed. The

aisles were filled with men and women standing.

Mr. MacDonald had scarcely recovered from an illness and was not able to conduct the entire service. The pastor read the eleventh of Hebrews,— that list of worthies who by faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens! A prayer was offered, a hymn sung, and George MacDonald stepped forward. He is a tall man, and the flowing beard, which was black when he visited America, shone as if silvered by the lights from another world. He leaned over the pulpit cushion. His eyes moved slowly over the congregation until they caught and held every other eye. They seemed to burn into the waiting multitudes as the fires of Sinai. The silence had become almost a pain, when the preacher broke it by saying in his deep bass, with the slight Scottish accent into which, when deeply moved, he often falls unconsciously: "We have heard about these men of feyth. I am not going to tell you what feyth is. There are enough to do that. I am going to try and help you to believe."

Then for an hour and fifteen minutes he talked as a man talketh to his friend. One

hearer felt, and others appeared to receive the same impression, that the speaker was addressing him alone. Every eye remained riveted upon the preacher. There was not a rustle in the house, and when he ceased the silence was like the silence of the grave, until the vast congregation drew that long sighing respiration which heralds the return to a consciousness of one's surroundings. Many left the church oblivious to the coats of arms upon their carriages, because they were thinking of the seal of the Son of man upon men's foreheads. To those who had heard the child telling of his Father that blazon seemed the only one worth minding.

The following Sunday no papers revealed where MacDonald was to preach. Had they done so it is probable that the carriages of rich men and nobles would have blocked the streets again, and thwarted his purpose.

He had asked a friend to dine with him that day. There was no other guest, and when this one arrived Mrs. MacDonald said: "George has had a bad night, and is not strong enough to come down. He wants to see you, but you must not let him talk much."

He seemed too feeble for any kind of

effort, and did not leave his bed till nearly six o'clock.

At six he started with his friend toward one of the poorer parts of London. The close the two entered had been what would be called in New York or Chicago one of the "infected districts." High rookeries on both sides excluded the sunbeams except for an hour or two near midday. Miss Octavia Hill had chosen the place for one of her first experiments. In the midst of surrounding foulness she had selected the least disreputable building. Wealthy friends had bought it and put it at her disposal. The small ground tenements had been converted into a single room. It was clean as the sky. A few pictures hung upon the walls; flowers were in the windows; a piano in one corner. Hither all who would had been invited to come, upon the single condition that they should bring clean faces. Miss Hill did not at first insist even upon clean hands.

To attract the desired visitors there were each evening music from the piano, sunny songs, and such simple entertainments as would, in the lady's judgment, prove alluring. Gradually the people began to come: first the women with their children in their arms;

then a disheveled man would peer through the window and sidle shyly toward the door. There on Sundays at least such visitors generally found the son of Frederick Denison Maurice, with the great tender eyes and lovely smile of his father, waiting to welcome them. In time the room was filled.

One evening Miss Hill told those she had thus collected that she had a friend whose talk she would like them to hear for a little while the next Sunday. At once the men began to bristle. They asked if he were a clergyman, because "they did n't want to hear no parsons."

"No! he is not a parson," she replied.

"Does he wear a white choker?" for "they did n't want no ministers."

"No, he wears a red one."

Upon that assurance they agreed to come and hear him.

So Miss Hill asked George MacDonald to put on a light coat, wear his own red necktie, and come the next Sunday to talk to her publicans and sinners. There were not many hearers that first Sunday, but every Sunday after, when he was expected, the place, I have been told, was packed by people, many of them from the slums.

The evening I have mentioned, the usual throng was waiting for him. Some had tattered coats, some had none. Many of the women carried children in their arms. When he entered the room and worked his way to the little platform, eyes in soddened faces brightened. The people nudged each other and whispered, "Yon 's him!" There was no prayer, but a lovely lady sang a sweet song. The hearers did not seem to care for it. They were waiting eagerly for what was to follow. They were very still when MacDonald began to say: "I think you must wonder why I am not ashamed to look you in the face. Do you never say of me, 'What business has he to talk to us?' for I 've got a good coat, and many of you have no coats at all; I have plenty of good food, and some of you get only a bite now and then, and that of the poorest. I have many friends and live in a house better than some of you ever saw the inside of. I have everything heart can wish, and you have almost nothing. Now that 's all true. But I 've come to tell you of something more I 've got, without which all the other things I have would n't be worth having, and which if you have you won't mind whether

you have the other things or lack them. I want to tell you how to get that."

They listened as if with ears pricked forward, while he told them of the master who, though poor as they, was yet the happiest man who ever lived; told them what that master had said and done to poor people. "It is n't being poor, and it is n't being rich, and it is n't even being good that can make us happy. It 's only knowing your Father that can make you that. You are little children sitting on the curbstone hunting in the gutter for things. Behind you is a king's palace, finer than Buckingham. In it your Father sits. He is waiting with hungry heart for you. He is sending out messengers all the time to bid you come into the palace to Him and receive all that his love longs to give you. But you won't listen. You won't even turn around to look. You just keep on hunting in the gutter for things, and it does n't matter whether it 's rotten vegetables or pennies or shillings you find there. They can't make you happy without your Father." When at last he asked them to pray, in voices subdued and broken they joined him, "Our Father which art in heaven."

When MacDonald's health forbade him to spend the cold months of the year in England, after two years' trial of other places, he made himself a winter home at Bordighera on the Italian Riviera. It is the spot which Ruffini chose as the scene of his story of Doctor Antonio. Though near Monaco and Mentone, it is a quiet place and has many English residents. Here for a number of years MacDonald has spent his winters. The change saved his life and gave him a measure of health greater than he had ever known before.

On Wednesday afternoons invited friends assemble in the large parlor of his house to listen to his readings from the poets and classic prose writers, and his comments upon them.

On Sunday nights his doors are opened for all who wish to share in the family devotions. One friend after another asked permission to come, until these talks and prayers with his children grew into an established religious service free to all. The numbers who for more than fourteen years have flocked to this service show how highly the privilege has been appreciated. The large hall in which the meetings are held

was built after Mr. MacDonald's own plans, and was long the only one in Bordighera of size sufficient for public gatherings. It was used not only for the entertainments frequently given by himself and his family, but was freely offered for gatherings of the peasants' children and such other public meetings as the people's needs required.

Among the pleasantest and most useful of the entertainments given there have been those prepared by the family at Christmas times. In these have been shown the Annunciation, The Holy Babe in the Manger, The Visit of the Wise Men and the Shepherds to Bethlehem, and other scenes from the sacred story. The tableaux have been mainly meant for the children of the neighborhood. The peasants and artisans from the first delighted in them. On one occasion three hundred children with their friends, all of them Italians and most of them poor people, were present. The influence upon them of these entertainments was shown in exclamations like these: "Oh, you believe in the Holy Babe and the Madonna!" "We are so glad you know about our church! We did not think you knew about the cross and the Bambino."

They had been somewhat persecuted by a well-meaning but rather narrow-minded zeal which spent its efforts in trying to make them Protestants instead of making them know their Christ. For this reason they thought the English heathen, and in some of the small villages near by often stoned them. But this has all been changed. A single illustration, taken from many that would serve equally well, may show how the change was wrought.

Father Giacomo, the parish priest, an excellent and devoted man, was prevented by lack of funds from completing his church. The MacDonalds gave a concert which brought in a considerable sum of money. This they sent to him. It was sufficient to finish the building, and the structure now stands, a witness to all who look upon it that English people know Christ and mind what he told us all to do.

It is deeds like this — deeds done simply, quietly, constantly — which have won, by deserving, for George MacDonald and his family the admiration and the love of his Italian neighbors, rich and poor alike.

The time may come when the sight of Father Giacomo — that good old man in his

brown Franciscan dress — trying to thank MacDonald, and, when the words would not come, falling upon his neck and embracing him, will appear to all men a finer tribute and a proof of greater because more Christ-like power than even the words of the late Archbishop of Canterbury, spoken as he left MacDonald's house after listening to the usual Sunday evening talk, "We come to Bordighera to be taught."

Caring for those at hand has not made Mr. MacDonald careless of friends far off. At Christmas time it has been his custom to write a poem and send copies of it as greetings to those in distant places. Some of these Christmas hymns have been published, though not, I think, by him.

Now this man, whose life has been so largely spent in thoughtful ministrations for the good of others that those who know him well find it hard to understand where he has found time for other things, is one of the most productive of English authors, one of the most thorough and accomplished of English scholars, one of the keenest and profoundest of Shakespearean critics; he has not had a well day for years, or a day's free-

dom from pain; and he is, as the world judges, a poor man.

His boyhood was spent on his father's farm at Huntley in Aberdeenshire. He has had the finest culture England and Scotland can furnish. He has never been wealthy, but he has unflinchingly believed that to do good was his business, while to add the things needful for himself — the "other things" — was the business of his Heavenly Father. For to him the world is his Father's house, and he is his Father's child.

In early manhood he was settled with a small salary as a Congregational minister. But he made the small salary suffice. The officers of his church were in bondage to the accepted traditions of their time. If that time were to-day, it might not be uncharitable to call them narrow, bigoted. Those who remember the disturbance wrought in the religious thinking of many good people in New England by "David Elginbrod" and "Robert Falconer," when those books first appeared, can understand why their author could scarcely be regarded as a "safe" preacher by the pillars of Orthodoxy in a rural dissenting church of Old England. But when those defenders of the

faith told their pastor that they could not continue his salary, he did not suspect their reasons. With a childlike trust in which suspicion could not lodge, he replied: "Never mind. Give me what you can." Then he and his wife agreed that by taking a few boarders or pupils they would try to remain where they were. But one morning Mrs. MacDonald, returning from making a few visits, met her husband with a look of deep distress, and said: "George, it is n't that the people here are too poor to pay us. They don't want us."

That, of course, ended his first pastorate. His preaching was too simple, too direct, too unconventional in phraseology, too much like his Master's, to suit the hearers there.

He removed to Manchester, where the harsh climate and the hard work he did came near costing his life.

Here in two small rooms he began preaching to any who chose to hear. The workingmen came, at first by twos and threes, then crowding the space. No one paid to hear him preach. He gave lessons when he could find pupils, but lived mainly as his Master did, his humble hearers ministering to him of their meagre substance.

In Manchester a terrible illness — hemorrhages of the lungs — laid him aside from active work. For three years he was unable to speak or write. Sickness and sorrow have been ministering angels through his life. It was the death of a son, loved deservedly as few sons are ever loved, which moved him to write that volume of poems which have comforted so many, "The Diary of an Old Soul." It seemed a miraculous return to life when, four years later, he was able to settle in London and begin again the active work of preaching, lecturing, and writing.

It was a day memorable to the great multitude of those whom he has taught to pray, "Our Father, which art in heaven," when Mrs. MacDonald said to her husband: "George, you can write a story. You can preach to more people in that way than in any other!"

After much hesitation and reluctance he at length set himself to try. So "David Elginbrod" was written, and there followed that series of books which have by their influence, direct and indirect, wrought with incalculable power to make our Heavenly Father known to our bewildered generation.

George MacDonald is known in America,

chiefly as a novelist. But two able English critics, Mr. Holbeach and Mr. Geddes, rank him as the successor of Wordsworth, and count him in native ability the peer of Tennyson. Of his poetic powers, great as they appear to me to be, I attempt no analysis, venture no estimate. Each of the critics I have quoted inquires why MacDonald has not devoted himself to poetry alone, and neither finds a satisfactory reply.

A friend once asked him the same question. His answer was: "I do not like novel-writing. But I have to earn my bread. My business is poetry. I write novels because I have to. My wife thought I could, and persuaded me to try. I had written the 'Portent' and 'Phantastes,' but my first novel was 'David Elginbrod.'"

But though he had to "earn his bread," the bread has never been first in his thought. He has considered the sparrows, and believes he is of more value than they. It is his to do faithful work. His Father will feed him. He has never wrought carelessly. "You would be surprised," he once said, "to know the labor I spend on every sentence. I go over all three times. First, I write my story with the type-writer; secondly, I go

over it, and there will rarely be a sentence which I do not change. A great deal is cut out, some is put in; thirdly, I go over all again, correcting a great deal."

Some years ago during a severe illness of Mr. MacDonald, his wife was prostrated in the adjacent chamber. Both recovered slowly. Before Mrs. MacDonald left her chamber, at her husband's suggestion she had dramatized the "Pilgrim's Progress," which, after the Bible, is her favorite book.

When the play was given by the family, at first in drawing-rooms, then in halls to which the public might gain access more easily, friends feared that social prestige might be endangered by these performances. This opinion reached George MacDonald's ear. He replied to it by giving the drama, in which he had himself taken the characters of Evangelist and Great Heart, more publicly than the family had done before. Shall Mrs. Grundy keep us from doing what we believe pleases our Father?

It has been my privilege to see the family perform the play, and I have never from any sermon, oratorio, or other religious service received an impression so profound, so permanent, and so Christian as it made upon

me. You will remember how Christian goes astray; how Evangelist meets and directs him back into the right path. It is here that Evangelist exclaims: "Verily, thou oughtest not so to do."

I have seen George MacDonald in the pulpit swaying a vast congregation as the wind sways the branches of an elm; melting them as the sun melts snow; rousing their consciences as thunder rouses dread. I have heard him on the lecture platform straining the most agile intellects of our time in their efforts to grasp his keen analysis and follow his masterly combinations of thought; I have seen him meet a man furious with passion, bent on mischief, and subdue him in a moment by simple words, affirming "That is not right," spoken as I think the Master would have spoken them. But the strongest influence I ever received from a single utterance mastered me when I saw him stand before the wavering and frightened Christian and heard him say, "Verily, thou oughtest not so to do." Sinai and Calvary seemed to blend their voices; all the sins, the meannesses, the shame of which I had ever been guilty appeared to writhe as a hideous thing in tangible shape before me, while the beauty of

righteousness rose over it as the morning breaks above tortured Ætna. I felt as Moses may have felt when he heard the High and Holy One of Israel say: "Thou shalt not;" and yet as the woman who was a sinner may have felt when she heard, "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more."

It is thus that George MacDonald will stand in my remembrance, saying to us sinners of the nineteenth century: "Verily, thou shalt not, for with God is forgiveness of sins!" and pointing us toward him who, because he is the King omnipotent, eternal, blessed forevermore, is perfectly "poor in spirit."

VI.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF SORROW.

We entered the world with a cry. Unless we are wholly worthless we shall leave it in a rain of tears. Even if we are that, there may be some one who will weep when we go. We are told that God will wipe away all tears from the eyes of his people. Why does he not do it now? O Lord, how long? has been the cry of the faithful since Eve wept over the body of Abel.

Every "heart knoweth its own bitterness." The commonplaces of consolation exasperate the pain they are meant to soothe.

> "The toad beneath the harrow knows
> Precisely where each sharp tooth goes.
> The butterfly upon the road
> Preaches contentment to the toad."

No one can quote these lines of Mr. Kipling when the Man of Sorrows utters his own experience in the words: "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." Yet even in his presence the ques-

tion comes: "Were it not better never to mourn than to mourn and be comforted? Can there be crutches fine enough to make lame limbs a blessing?"

Plainly, either we do not agree with the Master, or we do not understand Him. For we see in the widow's veil a crown of *thorns*. He saw in it a *crown* of thorns.

Let us weigh his words. He did not say: "Blessed are they who are bereaved of their health, their property, their friends." That I think would not be always true. What we call misfortune sometimes develops a lovely strength; sometimes crushes the little strength one has. Shakespeare has shown us how prosperity perfected the character of his most admirable king and ruined that of his most execrable one. A throne made Henry V. a hero, and a throne made Macbeth a brute. But mark; Henry V. became a king blessed and blessing, because when his royal father was like to die he mourned, as he ought to have done; Macbeth became a brute, because when his royal benefactor was like to die he rejoiced, as he ought not to have done.

On the other hand, what we call misfor-

tune poisoned the soul of Timon and sweetened the spirit of Cordelia. When Timon's property went and his friends forsook him, he did not mourn. He hated and cursed his fellows and rejoiced in the discovery of their turpitude. When Cordelia's father cursed her she mourned because she had lost his love. So, said the Master, they who suffer are the blessed ones. That is always true, since capacity for suffering is in heaven's heraldry the blazon of nobleness. In this perplexing world Caliban often weds Miranda. Him nothing troubles while the wine lasts and the cramps delay. Her portion is heart-break over his sin and shame. Which of these two is the blessed one? Which of them had you rather be?

A group stands upon the temple floor. A sin has been committed. Of her who committed it we know only that she is expecting death. Each of the others holds the same relation to her and to her sin. Some of them exult in her transgression. They exclaim, "She was taken in the very act. Now Moses in the law saith that such shall be stoned." They have found an opportunity to vindicate the law and show how just they are.

One of the group is so crushed with grief that he cannot look up, but "stooped down and wrote upon the ground." Where was the blessedness? With the many who rejoiced, or the one who mourned?

When your mother died or showed a feebleness that told you death was near, the light went out of your life. You mourned. When the Alaskan's mother grew too feeble for work, he shut her in a snow hut, left her to starve or smothered her at once, and went upon his way rejoicing. Are you the blessed one, or is he?

In proportion as we disobey Christ we exempt ourselves from mourning. If we could hold our hearts from loving, if we could be icicles instead of Christians, we should never know Gethsemane. If we mind him who told us to love one another as he loves us, we yield ourselves free-will offerings to sorrow. But which is the more blessed, Jezebel or Florence Nightingale? Caiaphas or John? The search for creatures who do not mourn leads us not up towards the angels, but down towards the oysters. If all the people on our continent began to cut each other's throats, the bivalves would not care. But when one little child

repents of its least transgression there is joy among the angels of God; and therefore when one sinner refuses to repent there must be grief in heaven. Which are the blessed ones, oysters or angels?

There are men who never mourn. They can hear without heeding the wail of the world. They feel no pain which does not come from bodily pinches. Such a man was Herod.

There are others who feel the sins and sorrows of the world so deeply that they are rightly said to bear them. Such in some degree was Paul. Such in perfect measure was he who lifted his eyes to heaven and sighed for the man who was dumb; who wept with Mary and with Martha; who wrung his hands in lamentations over Jerusalem; who carried our sorrows, bore our sins in his own body on the tree, and is "blessed forevermore."

Christ told us why such as he are blessed. "They shall be comforted;" he did not say "consoled" nor "soothed," but "comforted," "con-fortis," "strengthened."

The word here rendered "comforted" is used throughout the New Testament to signify "strengthened." A shivering man

may be wrapped in blankets, brought to the fire, and so warmed for a time. That is our conception of "comforting."

His vital forces may be stimulated and increased till they drive away the chill and conquer the cold. That is the New Testament idea of "comforting."

Few words in the Bible have been more misunderstood than this. By it we mean "soothing." One to whom the language of the New Testament was a mother tongue would mean by it the opposite of "soothing." To us the word suggests lullabies; to him it would suggest war cries. The greatest tragic poet of Greece has left a description of the battle of Salamis. The Persian ships, many and strong, in double crescent lines blockaded Piræus harbor. The Athenian vessels, few in number, were crowded within it. When the sun had set, the night before the battle, the commanders of both fleets went from ship to ship rousing the courage of the soldiers by brave words. Doing that, Æschylus called "comforting" the soldiers.

This is the usual meaning of the word in the New Testament.

Thus when Apollos was unwilling, per-

haps afraid, to visit Corinth, whither duty called him, Paul wrote: "I greatly desired [or urged, literally, comforted] him to go."

When Peter feared the elders might neglect their duties, he wrote: "I, who am also an elder, beseech [literally, comfort] you to feed the flock of God."

Paul, after describing to the discouraged Thessalonians the triumphant return of Christ, assured them that it was at hand, and bade them "comfort [that is, encourage, stimulate, excite to steadfast endurance] one another by these words."

The work of the Holy Spirit, "which is the Comforter," is described, not as wiping away tears, but as exciting that courage and force which battles with the storm and plucks victory from disaster. If there were any doubt of this it would be removed by observing what the Comforter did to the disciples when the spirit was poured upon them on the day of Pentecost. Suddenly the eleven frightened men, who had been scattered as sheep without a shepherd, became lions; Peter, who a few days before had lied in terror of a maid-servant, stood firm, immovable, before the magnates who had crucified his Master. He was stronger

than they all because to him the "Comforter had come."

For three days Le Clerc was driven through the streets of Meaux, the lash curling around his naked body, his blood staining the pavements. Beside him walked an ecclesiastic promising instant deliverance and large rewards if he would recant. The rabble followed, hooting. Close behind the martyr pressed a gray-haired woman. She wrung her hands in agony as she urged him to be steadfast. The gray-haired woman was his mother. In the Cathedral Square her son was forced to watch the fagots laid, the fire kindled, the irons heated. When the irons were red the executioner held them before his eyes, "Will you recant?" The martyr had been weakened by loss of blood. He lifted his hands as if he meant to yield. A shriek came from the gray-haired woman. He glanced at her. She was wringing her hands in extremity of woe. Still he wavered, one word would set him free. Clear and loud a voice rang out: "My son! My son! Glory be to Jesus Christ and to his faithful confessor."

Instantly the bound man turned his fore-

head to receive the branding iron. His mother had comforted him.

This may illustrate the promise of Christ, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

The ray pierced the shadow when George MacDonald sang:

> Pardon! Lord! Full well I know
> These same thorns that make me fret—
> Down—to help us homeward—lo!
> Thy untwisted crown is let.

Out of that experience which was perfected when our Lord, weighted with the sins and sorrows of a world, knelt and sweat, as it were, great drops of blood, but arose strengthened, with all power in heaven and on earth given into his hand, the Man of Sorrows said to us, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

VII.

ST. PAUL.

"BLESSED be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulations, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." So wrote St. Paul. The Scriptures give us two pictures of that "myriad-minded man." The first shows him as he appeared when, breathing forth threatenings and slaughter, he tried, by the means men generally employ, to get his own will done. He failed as men usually fail when they undertake to accomplish their aims by the method of strikes, lockouts, and boycotts.

The second picture shows the apostle as he appeared when for years he had practiced the method of Jesus Christ; a method which gave him an influence scarcely paralleled in history, and enabled him at last to shout,

with trumpet-toned triumph, "I have fought a good fight."

In the words which stand at the beginning of this chapter the apostle himself tells us how Saul, the futile, was changed into Paul, the powerful; how Saul of Tarsus became Paul of the Universe; and so gives a miniature not wholly inaccurate of that attribute of Christ revealed in the words: "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be strengthened."

The city of Tarsus lay in the southeast corner of Asia Minor, upon a noble river, twelve miles from the sea. It was the Chicago of Asia Minor, without the splendid virtues which make Chicago illustrious. Founded by Persia, long ruled by Egypt, largely settled from Greece, Tarsus was conquered at last by Rome. It was among the most cosmopolitan of cities. In it both the Jewish and Pagan worlds were reflected as in a mirror. There was no better school in which to study every phase of Gentile life. Here was an important political and business centre of Asia Minor. Here stood one of the two most famous universities in the world. Nowhere else appeared more striking proofs that "the love of money is a

root of all evil." Nowhere else were examples more appalling of the vices by which those "who refuse to keep God in their knowledge" "are delivered over unto all uncleanness." Nowhere else were illustrations more vivid of the despicable thing which intellect becomes when, prostituted to selfish aims, it makes "fools of those who would be wise."

For here Paul's grandfather may have seen the politicians and the merchant princes of Syria crowding each other in their haste to sell their country to the lecher, Antony, and his paramour, the Egyptian Cleopatra. Here Paul himself could read, carved in marble, or inscribed in brass above the portals of the temples, and perhaps upon their altars, that epigram ascribed to the mythical founder of the city which Byron paraphrased: "Eat, drink, love! The rest 's not worth a fillip," and which Paul himself translated: "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

Here, too, the children saw upon the streets learned professors of the university wrangling in silly disputations which too often ended in fisticuffs, and inspired at least one learned professor to go at night to the house

of another learned professor and smear it with pitch or other filth.

The awful catalogue of heathen vices in the epistle to the Romans is only a concise description of the social life of Tarsus.

In this gilded, glittering, fetid, rotting city lived a family, passionately loyal to the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. It was a diamond sparkling in a sewer. To this family, not far from the time when the angels sang over Bethlehem, a son was born. For thirteen years, while the Master was growing up in the seclusion of Nazareth, his great disciple weltered in the foulness of Tarsus. But it did not corrupt him. As Valjean in the Paris sewers gasped for pure air, the boy Saul, instructed by righteous parents, panted with passionate eagerness for the righteousness of Moses and the prophets.

At thirteen he was sent to Jerusalem, where it seems he had a married sister. There the desire for righteousness, the rich inheritance from pious parents, which had been strengthened by feeding upon the inspired teachers of Israel, and intensified by the repulsiveness of the uncleanness around him, grew stronger still. He studied with

Gamaliel, but he caught none of the gentleness of that mild and tolerant teacher. He was in the school of the Pharisees. He inhaled the atmosphere of those who crucified Christ. His zeal for righteousness was warped into a bigoted and vindictive hatred toward all who lightly regarded the letter of the Jewish law. He could see no good in those who differed from him. Such he believed should be destroyed, and he deemed himself the sword of the Lord selected to destroy them. An embodied conscience perverted; a bigot, a persecutor; breathing forth threatenings and slaughter, as a furious bull smoking at the nostrils, yet finding all his frantic rushes futile, — for the more he raged, the faster Christians multiplied; — such was Saul, when he first appears in the New Testament as Luke, his dearest friend, his "beloved physician," describes him.

Beside that portrait, place the man at Miletus, who served God "with all humility of mind, and with many tears and trials which befell him by the lying in wait of the Jews," when they who had once opposed him "all wept sore and fell on his neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for these words 'that they should see his face no

more.' " Then mark how the change in him was wrought.

Upon each round of the ladder he ascended is written, " Blessed are they that mourn."

I. He was poor. It is hard to be poor. It is harder still for one who has been rich, and Paul's parents were affluent. Before he left Jerusalem for Damascus, that is, for the first thirty years of his life and more, he never felt the pinch of poverty. From that time he never ceased to feel it. He has told us so. I have glanced into the Mamertine prison at Rome, where he lay shivering because he could not afford to buy a cloak, but had to wait for the one left behind at Troas, and seen in that incident a miniature of his greatness.

When we lose our property and have to shiver because we are poor, we are tempted to pity ourselves, and bewail the hardship of our lot. While we do that our poverty is only a pain. It cannot give us the good it is meant to bring us.

But Paul in his poverty thought not of himself, but of two things infinitely more important, which his poverty enabled him to understand. Forced to feel how hard it is

to be poor, he thought first of Him, who though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor; second, of other poor people and their needs. So, because in his poverty he permitted God to strengthen him, this harshest of persecutors became the most compassionate of men; especially considerate of the poor. "Remember the Lord Jesus, how he said it is more blessed to give than to receive," was the refrain of his life-song.

II. But there is something harder than poverty for an energetic man. It is bodily infirmity. This Paul had to bear continually. It appears from intimations in the New Testament, not a few, that Saul was a young man strong and well when he started for Damascus. But soon afterward he became, and continued for the rest of his days, weak and sickly. I incline to think his health was broken by that long fast in Arabia, which followed his persecution at Damascus, before his return to Jerusalem. This "thorn in the flesh" hampered, thwarted, humiliated him. It exposed him to the contempt of the Greeks who worshiped physical beauty and power; to the sneers of the Jews who saw in sickness the sign of sin.

One of the strongest passages in literature is the description, by Eugène Sue, of a masterly man clutched and handcuffed by cholera at the moment when he reaches his hand to seize the prize which, with consummate skill and with patience and energy almost superhuman, he has toiled for years to attain. Oh, the sickening disappointment when a fever says to an enthusiast: "Thou shalt not." Such was Paul's frequent experience.

The apostle was tortured by the fear of death. Probably his physical infirmities were the cause of the terror it inspired in him. The same anxiety often appears in permanent invalids. Whatever the cause, the fact is certain. All the other New Testament writers have said less than he about the terror of dying. Whenever the subject comes within his view, the familiar shudder shakes him. He continually braces himself against it. But he will neither fly from his fears nor surrender to them. When other men fear death they try to forget it. Paul, strengthened by the "Comforter," fought his fears; conquered them; and so became the one man of all time who has for us taken from death its sting; from

the grave its victory. Every one whom the fifteenth of First Corinthians has helped to bear bereavement with resignation, to face death with fortitude, is a witness testifying, perhaps unconsciously, "blessed is this man who mourned because of sickness and death."

III. Paul has been called the most perfect gentleman who ever lived. We study his addresses to Felix, to Festus, to Agrippa, to the philosophers of Athens; his letter to Philemon; and learn how perfect truthfulness may be combined with perfect courtesy.

The epistles to the Corinthians suffice to show us how he became the model gentleman.

He was the most sensitive of men. He felt a slight as others feel a blow. A suspicious glance stabbed him. Kind words moved him to tears. That superlative sensitiveness, which, wrongly used, made him almost fiendish in his hatreds, rightly used, made him the supreme gentleman of history.

There are human sensitive plants. A breath makes them shrink and close their leaves. In such there is the making of angels or of demons. The careless word, the averted glance, of a friend pierces them to

the quick. Suspicion breeds easily in hearts that are sore. Therefore it is that —

> "Whispering tongues can poison truth,
> And constancy lives in the realms above,
> And life is fleeting, youth is vain,
> And to be wroth with those we love
> Doth work like madness in the brain."

When Paul quivered under a slight or an ill-natured sneer, his reflection was: "Oh, how this hurts me! I will never give to another pain like this!" Deeply delighted by some small kindness, as by that which he received from the poor people of Philippi: "Ah me! How sweet it is! I will treat others thus."

So when Paul's sensitiveness made him mourn, he obeyed the divine inspirations and was "comforted."

IV. Paul was the most affectionate of men. His love burned in patriotism. He could wish to be accursed even from Christ for his kinsmen's, his countrymen's sake. Yet he had to live an exile. Trained to despise Gentiles, his life was devoted exclusively to Gentiles. The most unflinching of Jewish bigots, he became the supreme preacher of religious liberty.

How did these changes come to pass?

He was exiled, persecuted, excommunicated, because he would obey God rather than man. So he learned the wickedness of bigotry.

V. There are few who have not experienced that distress which the psalmist described when he said that his way was "hedged in."

Napoleon felt it at St. Helena. The rat in the trap feels it. Each according to the strength of his intelligence, and the fervor of his purposes.

It comes from the consciousness that one can get nowhere; that every opening is closed, every path barred, every effort thwarted.

Few men have had to bear more of that torture than Paul. One experience which was repeated five or six times in his life, and probably much oftener, makes this manifest.

His dearest hope was to preach in Rome. For Rome was the fulcrum of influence over mankind. Year after year, he worked steadfastly toward the realization of his hope. The way at last was opened. He was ready to embark for the Imperial City. Before he could board the ship, he was arrested, cast into prison, and there confined

for two years. To him they must have seemed years of utter uselessness. When this period of mourning ended, his lifelong desire was gratified. He reached Rome. For an hour he felt that he could strike the bell the whole world must hear. Before he had sounded a note, he was again cast into prison. Surely most men would have felt they could do nothing more, that God had refused to use them.

Not so Paul. To him, too, it must have appeared that he could not do much. But he could do a little, and that little he did. Ink and parchment were obtainable, though not even parchment, it seems, without long waiting. The wasted, weary time, when he could not go or do as he wished, he employed in writing letters. There are few of his Epistles which do not bear witness to some thwarting obstacle, which had prevented him from doing as he had planned. And these letters have exerted a hundredfold more influence in accomplishing the things he hoped for than all the other work of his life. They would never have been written if their author had not been forced to mourn. The poverty which made him the friend of the poor; the physical infirmities

which made him see the rays of Easter gilding his Calvary; the sensitiveness which taught him how to win the love of all who were not devilish; the persecutions which made him the herald of liberty; the bitter disappointments which gave us the Epistles, — all these with united voices repeat to us, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be strengthened."

VIII.

THE INHERITANCE OF THE MEEK.

Some manuscripts place this utterance, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth," immediately after the first beatitude, so making our Lord's words read, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." If such were the true order, it would emphasize the fact that the Lord intended both worlds for his people, and meant them to take possession of each. But the order to which we are accustomed is probably the right one, because "Blessed are the meek" is the complement of "Blessed are they that mourn."

They that mourn are blessed because they are undergoing the process by which God makes men. But the thought comes: "So many suffer without being developed into finer manhood." The answer is, "Though suffering is the sculptor's tool, men are not clay. They are free agents. They have

something to do." The same rain petrifies punk and vivifies seeds. Meekness is that coöperation on man's part which makes God's work in him effective. It consists in cheerful acquiescence in God's will and sturdy cooperation with God's efforts. It is not a passive, nor a weak, nor an easy, nor a pliant quality. It may be steel. It may be water. When weights have crushed a steel spring, its snapping back may be meekness. When fire is applied to water, its expansion into steam may be meekness, because that is the will of the fire. When ice melts, its melting, for the same reason, may be meekness. When Luther delayed at Rome against his convictions of God's will, he was weak. The meekest moment of his life was when he said, "Hier stehe ich."

To make sure of this, observe that, whatever the beatitude means, it means something strikingly opposed to the convictions of nearly every one who heard Christ speak it.

Most of his hearers were Jews. They believed they were to inherit the earth because they were God's chosen people. When foreigners in our country prove abler than ourselves, the foolish among us set up the cry, "America for Americans." That race feel-

ing was stronger in Palestine than in the United States. The Jews believed that God had promised them not only the land they occupied, but the whole earth, because they were descendants of Abraham. This was taught in their schools, preached in their synagogues, sung in their hymns. It was the foundation of their religious faith, their political hopes, their social science. In this beatitude Jesus flatly contradicted it. John Baptist had said, "Think not to say we are Abraham's children, for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." In like manner Christ taught that the earth should be inherited by those who possessed a certain spiritual quality. Being Jews or being Gentiles had nothing to do with the matter.

When Christ spoke, the cry "Not only Rome for the Romans," but "the whole earth for the Romans," expressed the deepest convictions of scores of millions. Yet it was not long before the Cæsars found that even Rome was not for such Romans as they were.

But if the Jews were not to inherit the earth because they were Jews, nor the Romans, because they were Romans, who should inherit it? Christ answered: —

"The Meek."

And who are they?

The popular conception of meekness is partly right and partly wrong. It substitutes one of the usual signs of meekness for the quality itself, as if one mistook for the lily the lily's perfume.

That which is a sign of meekness may also be a sign of something else. A voyager reported gold in vast quantities on the St. Lawrence. He thought he told the truth, though there was no gold there. This was his mistake. Gold-dust has a yellow glitter. Iron pyrites also has a yellow glitter. The voyager mistook one of the qualities of gold, its yellow glitter, for the substance itself, and so thought iron pyrites the precious metal. This was a serious mistake, though not so serious by far as has been often made in the same way by mistaking weakness for meekness.

Meekness has, and must have for one of its accompaniments, a temper which is not easily provoked; a serenity which is not easily disturbed; an indisposition to retaliate injuries. These signs of meekness — which may also be symptoms of weakness — have been mistaken for the quality itself. Non-

resentment of injuries may indicate a dismal, dingy character. Lack of sensibility, cowardice, moral deadness that has lost capacity of indignation, may show apparent patience under outrage. A jelly-fish is serene and usually innocuous. An idiot struck will sometimes turn the other cheek and smile. Yet it would be an error to infer that an idiot is of necessity a Christian. It is a blunder to take a glow-worm for a star, or the shine of rotten wood for a beacon. Webster defines meekness as "submission to the divine will; patience and gentleness from moral and religious motives." He comes near mistaking the hands on the dial for the mainspring of the watch.

Meekness is that strength of will — that will-power — which comes from trust in the living God. In the eleventh of Hebrews it is called faith. Patience and gentleness are not in the Scriptures regarded as the root but as the leaves of the quality. "I am meek," said the Perfect One. He said it of himself; an inspired prophet said it of him; he indorsed that prophet's statement.

Observe the occasions Christ selected to draw attention to his attribute of meekness. John Baptist had just been cast into prison.

Our Lord was near the palace of that Herod who had imprisoned John. He was holding at bay the proud and powerful Pharisaic party; had just denounced them as worse than the men of Sodom. Then he turned to the helpless victims of their oppression, and said to them, — while those at whom he had hurled the lightning bolts listened, — "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest! . . . for I am meek and lowly in heart." His meekness should be their refuge. For while he was lowly in heart, to sympathize with the helpless, he stood like a rock to shelter them from the oppression of the strong. He was meek and lowly.

At another time the Jews and the Romans, the most malignant and the most powerful men in the world, were for different reasons assembled in large numbers at Jerusalem. Jesus knew that he was going thither to provoke and to face their combined hostility. He knew that the hate of Israel and the power of Rome would unite to thwart his purpose and stop his way. But he went straight forward, saying to his disciples that the prophet spoke the truth of him when saying, "Behold thy king com-

eth, meek, and riding upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass."

There are in history no other scenes expressing indomitable will to place beside the hucksters flying from the temple; the priests cowed in the presence of the people; the soldiers fallen upon their faces at Gethsemane; Pilate quaking on his judgment-seat, — before the One who was perfectly meek. Never before nor since did wrath burst from human lips in such lava-flood of consuming denunciation as he poured forth upon the rulers of Israel when he cried, "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" Then perfect meekness appeared incarnate in the Lion of the Tribe of Judah.

This quality of indomitable will, coming — whence alone it can come — from the consciousness of God's presence and almighty power, is the "faith of Jesus Christ," and you will observe that, although that word faith is the great word of the New Testament, it does not occur in the beatitudes. This, I think, is the reason. It is included in this word meek, as it is also the foundation of the first beatitude.

One who is not thoroughly bad or com-

pletely foolish deals with children in the spirit of meekness. "You must not put your hand in the fire, little one!" There is no passion, only indomitable will, in the parent saying that.

So Christ lived! So the meek man lives. He sees God so clearly, is so sure that God's ways are the only effective ways, that he pities when others are angered; is fearless when others are frightened.

Once when Francis Parkman was alone among the Sioux Indians they grew insulting. He knew they meant to murder and rob him. But he was not angry; he was not alarmed. He had a few rockets at hand. He knew that the moment he fired one of them the savages would take him for a deity. In that consciousness he was calm.

"You are angry," said Themistocles; "therefore you are wrong." When one feels the Power that makes for righteousness working for him he is not easily provoked. It is will-power that takes possession of the earth. To strength of will that inheritance is given, and the only source of indomitable will is perfect trust in God.

"And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great

multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast. And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master; and kissed him. And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him. And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest, and smote off his ear. Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" "And he touched his ear, and healed him."

IX.

MOSES.

"A GREEN ribbon a thousand miles long and varying in width from two to twelve, though rarely exceeding five; striped with a central line of umber; raveled at the northern end and the threads spread like a half-open fan; this ribbon of verdure stretched directly south from the Mediterranean upon a limitless expanse of scorching, dazzling sand, — that was Egypt, the land 'in which it seemed always afternoon.'"[1]

Near the south end of the ribbon was Thebes; a few miles south of the Delta, Memphis; at the eastern corner of the Delta, near the head of the Red Sea, in the land of Goshen, was the third royal residence of Egypt.

Upon the solitude where Memphis once stood, a colossal head carved in red granite lies half-buried in the sand, staring at the sky. The face is Caucasian, the nose

[1] Wright's *Ancient Cities*, p. 56.

aquiline, the lower jaw heavy and strong. The soldiers of the first Napoleon saw in it a likeness to their great commander. Thirteen centuries before Christ the statue it completed stood at the entrance of the temple at Memphis.

Near Thebes, two others, like it, but larger, commanded the approaches to the largest and stateliest edifice ever erected by the hand of man. At the capital in Goshen a third colossus of the same origin, more than ninety feet in height, more than nine hundred tons in weight, — Professor Dawson thinks it weighed at least twelve hundred, — carved from a single block of sandstone, the largest monolithic sculpture known to history, towered above temple and fortress. Enormous granaries or storehouses, six hundred and fifty feet square, inclosed by walls twenty-two feet thick, built by the man whose memory these colossi have perpetuated, built of bricks upon each one of which his name is stamped, and built by the Hebrews whom he oppressed, are now being excavated.

In upper Egypt a mural picture containing eleven hundred figures, in colors fresh as if laid on yesterday, portrays the same man in his war-chariot, drawn by two steeds of

which the names have been preserved, as he appeared in the battle of Orontes, the Waterloo of the Hittite king. The national epic of Egypt, its Iliad, its Æneid, composed by the poet Pentaur, has come down to us and been translated. It is a narrative recounting the achievements of this same man in his war with "the children of Heth." His mummy has been recently discovered. It was swathed in pink linen, stamped all over with his name. The withered face was recognized at once by its resemblance to the granite features at Memphis.

This man was Ramses II., known to the Greeks as the great Sesostris, to us as the king "who knew not Joseph;" the Pharaoh "of the oppression." He was the proudest and most conspicuous monarch Egypt ever had. When his mummy was found it lay beside that of Thotmes III., whose fame among Egyptian kings is second only to his. There was barely time to photograph the face before it crumbled into dust, but the flower in his hand remained perfect. Even its color had endured, and a wasp which had settled upon it, probably unnoticed by the embalmer, had scarcely changed at all.

The Napoleon of the Nile is dust. A few scholars know a little of his history. The great world remembers of him only the poisonous sting, and the flower of Israel's faith which he vainly tried to crush.

The war described by the poet Pentaur was waged against a people whose interests were identical with those of Israel. There was danger that the slaves might rise to aid invaders against their oppressor. They were multiplying too fast for safety. Therefore the king decreed that the male children of their influential families should be killed at birth.

This decree had been issued when a certain man child was born to one of the slave mothers. For three months she kept the secret. When she could keep it no longer, love and fear combined to quicken her intelligence. She knew that a certain kind of river-reed was sacred to the River God, and shared perhaps the Egyptian superstition that it would charm away danger. She knew that Egyptian idols were carried upon men's shoulders in mimic ships, and may have shared the common faith that an ark or ship had some mysterious power to protect her child. Of the magic reeds she

made a little boat, placed her baby in it, and went at night to lay her treasure on the bosom of the sacred Nile, as many a Christian mother has carried her sick child to a cathedral and placed it in the arms of a sculptured Madonna.

Ramses, the king, had a hundred and nineteen children. One of them, Merris by name, was child to the daughter of the Hittite monarch he had conquered. A plausible tradition asserts that it was she who, as she went forth at sunrise to worship at the river, saw the waif upon the water, and exclaimed, "It is one of the Hebrews' children."

The royal ladies of Egypt were no less independent and no less influential than the princes. Miss Edwards has told us they were often more so. Nobility descended through the mothers, and might be inherited by adoption. Each princess had her own establishment.

This princess took the babe to her own home, adopted it, named it "Mesu," that is, in Egyptian, "My Son;" or possibly "Moses," which signifies, in Hebrew, "drawn," because he was taken out of the water.

The royal lady took care that her adopted child should learn the best that Egypt could teach. He was initiated into the mysteries of religion. He became familiar with those sacred poems which were withheld from the common people, — as in later times by some communions the Bible has been kept from the laity, — and known only to a very few. These poems taught him to despise the idolatries of the land, and prepared him to meet the High and Holy One of Israel. Some of these poems, the prayers and hymns of the inner temple, have come down to us. The following are among them : —

"Hail to thee, Ra, Lord of the truth:
Whose shrine is hidden, God of Gods,
Who listens to the poor in distress."

"Gentle of heart to those who cry to him,
Deliverer of the fearful from the violent,
Judging the poor and the oppressed."

"Lord of wisdom, whose precepts are wise;
Lord of mercy, most loving,
At whose coming men live;
Opener of every eye;
Causer of pleasure and light:
Hail to thee for all these things;
The one alone with many hands;
Lying awake when all men sleep,
Sustainer of all things."

"God is One, and alone, and there is none other with him;
God is the One, the One who has made all things.
God is a spirit, a hidden spirit, and has existed from the beginning;
He is the primeval One; he existed when as yet there was nothing; he is everlasting and without end.
God is hidden, and no one can perceive his form.
God is the truth, he lives by the truth.
God is life, and man lives by him alone.
He blows the breath of life into their nostrils.
God is Father and Mother; the Father of fathers, the Mother of mothers."

"God is compassionate to those that fear him, and hears those that cry unto him.
He protects the weak against the strong.
God knows those who know him, He rewards those who serve him, and protects those who follow him." [1]

Such was the mental food upon which Moses fed while Egyptian priests mumbled idolatries before the people and ruled them by superstition. The heart of the religion of Egypt touched his heart; set him to hungering and thirsting for this High and Holy One of whom the secret writings told, but whom none of the people knew; the Be-

[1] The foregoing extracts are from a hymn to Amun-Ra. From the handwriting it may be judged to belong to the 19th dynasty or about the 14th century B. C. It purports to be only a copy, and the composition itself may be very much earlier. *Records Poet.* vol. ii. p. 123.

ing whose personality was suggested by the name of the nome or county in which Moses himself had been born, "The Realm of the Living One." The divine and distant vision of this Being was to the young Hebrew what the sun is to flowers even when it shines through mists.

Ramses was for sixty-seven years the monarch of Egypt. He was to that land not only all that Napoleon was for a decade to France. He was for the following reason more than any modern potentate can be to his subjects. The Pope of Rome — if I am not mistaken — is believed by the Roman Catholic Church to be the visible vicegerent of Jesus Christ. The Pharaoh of Egypt was believed to be, as it were, Christ himself. We believe that God has been once in the world's history incarnated in our Saviour. Egypt believed that Deity was incarnated in each of her Pharaohs. Egyptians were taught to address the Most High through Pharaoh. To Pharaoh they sung a hymn each morning. To Pharaoh their household worship was directed. He was to them "God manifest in the flesh."

Moses was practically the grandson of Ramses. Adoption into the royal family

made him that. With his genius he must have known that few things — scarcely the throne itself — were beyond the horizon of his ambition. Still more, he was a man of tenderest affections and finest sense of gratitude and honor.

The king's daughter was his more than mother. Not only his life, but all that he was, all that he had, all that he hoped for, he owed to her. The impulses of ambition, the drawings of gratitude, the strands of affection, drove and drew him toward closest union with the royalty of Egypt.

On the other hand, the divine vision he had caught in the temple mysteries, of the One who cared for the poor, succored the needy, watching while men slept, — this vision was to him more alluring than all besides. This shall be his God; him and him only will he serve.

He became the slaves' friend. In the graphic words of the Epistle to the Hebrews, he "chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt." He broke with all that stood for Egyptian power by slaying an

Egyptian lord in defense of a Hebrew slave, and was forced to fly. He fled alone. Years passed. Then came the great revelation; the burning bush, the awe of the unseen Presence; the shoes removed from off his feet; the quivering question, "Lord, in whose mysterious presence I am kneeling, who art Thou?" and the answer translated in our version, "I am that I am," which said to him, "I am the Living One." "He of whom you have read in the secret lore of Egypt; whose name is revealed in the name of your birthplace; whom you have longed to know and tried to serve. I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. I, after whom you have groped so loyally in the darkness of Egypt, am He who led your fathers thither, and I have chosen you to be my servant and the deliverer of my people."

That strength of will, which enabled Moses to master the temptations of Egypt, came from his faith in the living God. It was an example of the "meekness" to which is promised the inheritance of the earth. It grew stronger with each new revelation of God he received. To show that fully would be to repeat the story of his life. Nothing could thwart him, nothing could make him

turn aside, because where others saw only a pillar of cloud or of fire, he saw the High and Holy One whose garments had swept his cheeks, when, a young man, he knelt before the altars of Egypt; with whom, when an old man, he talked as a man "talketh with his friend."

Two scenes may serve to illustrate his whole career.

From the desert he returned to Egypt. Ramses was dead, Maneptha his son was on the throne. Moses sought and obtained an interview with him. The monuments enable us almost to photograph the scene.

A throne of ivory and gold. Upon the left of it, in a line slightly withdrawn, a band of priests. Each wears a robe of white linen caught at the waist by a gold girdle, and probably a necklace of gold with a small image of the bull Apis, in gold or ivory, pendent on the breast like a crucifix. Before them, abreast of the throne, is the high priest. He too wears a robe of white linen. About his waist a broad scarf fringed with bright colors falls to his knees, the ends stiff with jewels forming a sort of apron. He wears a collar of pearls and agates. Broad gold bracelets cover his forearms, and

a panther's skin, the head and claws plated with gold, drapes his right shoulder. There are probably royal ladies present. If so they stand at the left of the throne, and a long lock of hair plaited with gold threads, drooping over the left cheek of each, marks her royal birth.

Every one present has, on entering, prostrated himself and uttered a prayer to the king who sits upon the throne. As you look at him, lift your eyes from the gold sandals; from the jeweled stomacher which was afterward partly copied in the breastplate worn by the Jewish high priest. Pay no heed to the two crowns — one red, the other white, — which rest upon the arms of the throne to mark the double sovereignty of Upper and of Lower Egypt. Pass by the cap of red and white material, the broad gold band worn as a diadem, and let your eyes rest upon the golden asp blazing with gems, which rises with arching neck, eyes of ruby fire, and gaping jaws, above the monarch's forehead. For this is the emblem of supreme sovereignty. This uræus worn by Pharaoh is not only the emblem of sovereignty, it is also believed to be a talisman possessed of living powers. In battle its

breath of flame is trusted to blast the king's enemies.

In this august presence stand two men. Neither of them on entering has bowed or done reverence to the majesty of Egypt. The elder of them is a Hebrew slave well known in Tanis, for here he was born and has been bred. His name is Aaron. The other, three years younger, is his brother. What dress he wears I do not know, but in his hand he holds a shepherd's staff. Glance from the awe-inspiring uræus that flames above Pharaoh's brow to that shepherd's staff; remember that "every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians;" an unclean, despicable creature; regarded as the Brahmin regards the Pariah; and mark the "meekest man in all the earth," as he says to the king "The God of Israel, the God of your slaves, the God who cares for the poor, the God who has chosen me, a despised shepherd, to be his messenger, — he, not you, is the master. Behold the proof!"

He casts upon the floor his shepherd's staff, — emblem of all that Egypt has most despised, — and Israel shall most revere. Instantly it becomes that royal asp of which the symbol blazes on the monarch's brow.

"And the sorcerers did so with their enchantments." But the serpent of Moses swallowed the serpents of the magicians and the meekness of Moses mastered the pride of Pharaoh.

Beside this scene, which reveals the root of meekness, place another, which shows its flower.

Miriam and Aaron had conspired against their brother. But they could not provoke him. How could they irritate one who felt that God was with him, and that they were dashing themselves against the Almighty. When another would have raged, Moses felt only pity. He forgot they were fighting him; remembered only they were fighting God. What could he do but pray for them? "And Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, 'Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee.'" So after seven days Miriam was healed of her leprosy.

X.

HUNGER AND THIRST AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS.

HUNGER and thirst are the sharpest spurs an animal can feel. Hunger has made civilized men cannibals, and thirst has made them maniacs. When the Master said, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled," he declared in a figure that those whose strongest desire is for goodness shall be satisfied.

1. If the statement is true, it distinguishes men from brutes, and so effaces from the teachings of those who tell us we are only a superior species of apes, all that tends to undermine our faith in our immortality. It forces the doctrine of evolution to dignify our conceptions of man. This is the asserted order of development. Dust; seaweed; serpents; simia; Shakespeare. The Bible also tells us: (1) that God made man of the dust; (2) that he breathed his own

spirit into the moulded dust, and man became a living soul. Does it not increase our appreciation of human dignity, when science tells us that the Creator sifted the dust through plants and animals for millenniums before he thought it fine enough to model into forms for his children?

But I am not a sheep because I wear a coat of wool such as the sheep wears, only of finer quality. The radical difference between me and the sheep is not in the overcoat of wool which I take off at night and the sheep cannot; nor in the undercoat of flesh which I shall take off at death. It is in this: there never was a sheep to which complete satisfaction came through hungering and thirsting after righteousness; and there never was a man whose perfect satisfaction came in any other way. While we hold to that distinction, — which is only a paraphrase of our Lord's words — our faith will not be troubled by anything evolution has said.

2. This beatitude, whether it be true or false, distinguishes Christ's teachings about his death from the common pagan perversions of them.

False religions have assumed what we as-

sume nearly every day we live — that God could make us happy if he would. You can make a cat as happy as a cat can be, if only you are kind enough and rich enough. But God cannot make you happy by the same means, because you are not a cat.

Forgetting that, men fancy that the purpose of sacrifices is to bribe God into treating them better than he is disposed to do. Mothers have killed their children; men have swung on hooks, walked on nails, given their money to this or that, believing they could, by such means, persuade the Almighty to let them off from punishments or visit them with happiness. False forms of Christianity have been mainly adaptations of this error. They have taught that there was some approach to heaven other than the king's highway of holiness. That Christ's death was a divine device to take away penalties from transgressions and so make men happy without first making them good. The theory has always been in startling contradiction to familiar facts. Headaches and tremens follow excessive drinking as inevitably as they would have done had there been no atonement. A Christian who tells lies will suffer more, not less, than would a pagan in his place.

The theory is equally contradicted by Scripture, which tells us that Christ died to deliver us from our sins, and by no means from the penalties of our sins, until the sins themselves are gone. But facts and Scripture, when they get in the way of what one wishes to believe, are trifles. "The more incredible a statement, the more merit in accepting it," has been, and is still, the unconfessed belief of those who teach systems of religion which "unaided reason" sees to be untrue. Therefore Paul's battle-cry, "Justification by faith," which means "Christ can make those who trust him good," has been so often drowned in the clamorous vociferation, "Jesus Christ has appeased the wrath of God against our sins;" and the Lord's plain statement that he came to take away the sin of the world has been smothered in the falsehood that he came to take away from sins their penalties.

But Christ himself never flinched from the stringent declaration that nothing he had done or could do; nothing his Father had done or could do; nothing the Holy Spirit had done or could do, would help any man a hair's breadth toward heaven except by making him fit for heaven. We

must become new creatures hungering and thirsting after righteousness, as animals hunger after food and thirst after drink, or we cannot be satisfied.

Whether this is true or false, it is what our Lord said. The woman of Samaria understood him at once. Nicodemus found the fact more difficult to comprehend.

It is as if the Master had said, "There is bread. There is whiskey. You prefer the whiskey. There is no helping you until you choose the bread. I have suffered and died to put my spirit into you. Until you have divine desires you cannot have blessedness."

3. Is Christ's statement true? We may consider it as an expression of his own experience. If one were hungry and thirsty, had tasted this fruit and found it bitter, this water and found it salt; if he found another eating with zest a different fruit, drinking with sighs of satisfaction from a different well, he would infer that what this other man had found so good would prove good for himself. These beatitudes are the personal experiences of Christ. They outweigh the testimony of all other men, as the word of one who was present, saw the gold and said it was there, would outweigh the

evidence of a million men who were not present, did not see it, and said it was not there. For Jesus of Nazareth was the only one whose life has been continuously a hungering and thirsting after righteousness; he was the only one who has ever been completely satisfied; and he was satisfied perfectly with his work, with his Father, with himself. He never uttered a murmur or a complaint. He pitied the men we envy. He was constantly telling how happy he was, and wishing his friends might share his joy. Had he not told us, we should not have believed it possible.

If we saw a man poor, without even a place to lay his head at night; spending all his time endeavoring to help others and getting small thanks in return; opposed by nearly every one; a patriot who saw his country rushing to ruin; an ardent Christian who saw his church going to pieces; a devoted son and brother called by his own family a madman; an enthusiast for righteousness called by the elders and deacons of his church "Beelzebub;" arrested at last and crucified, but not until one of his dearest friends had betrayed him, another had denied him, and all had deserted and fled from him,

— it would be difficult to count such an one happy. But Jesus — the man of sorrows — was that.

When I remember what small vexations spoil my peace; when I see others going about doleful as mutes at funerals, for causes so slight they are often ashamed to mention them; when I see men who believe they have assurance of eternal bliss, limping toward heaven and groaning because of a flint or two upon the road that leads them thither, I look at the man whose trials were greater than I can measure, and see him alone among his griefs, despised and rejected of men, serene, radiant, sparkling. I compare him with myself. In every circumstance from which most of us expect beatitude, he was almost infinitely less favored than we are. But the amazing contrast is, he was so glad and we are so sad. He flashed joy into human life as the sun flashes light. We suck joy out of human life as a sponge absorbs water. Between his joy and ours is the difference between a lighthouse and a coal-pit. Inquire his secret! He answers: "I hunger and thirst after righteousness. My meat and my drink is to do the will of him that sent me."

That is meat and drink I know little of. I hunger and thirst for many things; most of all for what I call heaven. But my meat is not to do God's will. It is to get God to do mine. I see it in my prayers. I see it in my actions. I begin to feel that the Lord's words are true.

4. We may consider this beatitude as the outcome of our Lord's observation. "Seeing the multitudes;" seeing them as no other eye has ever seen them; loving them as no other has ever loved them; sympathizing with their miseries as no other has ever done, he spoke to them. He had mingled much with them. He had passed through temple and hovel; through cities, villages, and farms. He had watched men in markets, in ships, in vineyards, in kitchens; at weddings and at funerals; in sickness and in health; in poverty and in riches. He had cared for all, he had given medicine to all. And here a miniature humanity was spread before his eyes. There is a hungry tramp; here a weary watcher; yonder a cripple; far off a filthy leper. Here stands a widow carrying the dead in her heart; there a feverish blackguard, dreading punishment and hating his kind because he hates him-

self. All these have come because they are sure that the speaker loves them as a brother. And he tells each of these thirsting hearers that what they all need is not new reservoirs but new desires; that they are tormented because they have thirsted for other things; if they will thirst for righteousness they will be filled. These words he will often repeat in different ways.

To Mary and Martha weeping for their brother he will gently show that the source of their misery is, not in the tomb of Lazarus, but in their own hearts. To the multitudes grieving or raging over their wrongs, he will cry, "The supper is ready! You are hungry because you will not come! You are caring for acres of ground, or yokes of oxen — not for righteousness!" So Christ declared he had come to change nothing in the world but human desires, for nothing else needs changing.

Even when we have come to perceive the general truth of the Master's words, each one of us feels that he himself is an exception in their scope. I have set my heart on some one thing. If I might have only that, I think I should be happy. There are some sixteen hundred million such exceptions in

the world, and none of them will be satisfied until "he awakes in his likeness." All our miseries come of not setting God's will before our own.

When desires are gross, the truth is obvious.

One seeks first sensual pleasure. To gain it he has gone wrong. But he is not willing to be damned. He wants the pleasures of righteousness after he has exhausted the pleasures of sin. When his passions are sated they sleep for a while, and in their silence he hears the gnashing of teeth in the place toward which he is going. Afraid of that he begins to pray and even to ask others to pray for him. Soon his passions awake. Their clamors drown the sound of the weeping and wailing that comes from the outer darkness. He plunges once more into dissipation. Again and again recurs this horrible experience. As a maniac in a boat he eddies round the vortex; now laughing at the foam and wrath of the waters, now shrieking for help, now clutching the oars and rowing for a moment, with frenzy of despair, nearer and nearer the centre, till death sucks him from sight.

Another's tastes are finer. He strives to

do his duty. He wishes to be a good man and to be known as a good man. But he selects his duties. He will work indomitably to pay his debts. But even in this noble business he is not at peace. Unforeseen complications arise. The fear of failure is a telephone that brings into his ears the gnashing of teeth from afar. Failure comes. Gloom, despair follows. His aim has been to do, not God's will, but his own.

Better still, one wishes to be a Christian. But stop! "Wishes to be a Christian?" What do you mean by that?

Answer. "I wish to experience religion as my friend has done. He used to be moody, irritable. He was a worse man than I am. He tells me the whole world is changed for him. He is full of joy. Old temptations have lost their power over him. He finds it easy to do right. He feels 'like singing all the time.'"

That means you, too, are hungering and thirsting, not after righteousness, but after pleasure; pleasure of the noblest kind; pleasure it is God's will that you should have. But so it does not come. Why?

Jesus was going to Galilee. He must

needs go through Samaria. There was a shorter and easier way, a way that would not bring him among people who hated the nation to which he belonged. But he must needs go through Samaria, because he hungered after righteousness. Near Samaria he was faint for food, and sent his disciples to procure it. He thirsted for water and asked for drink which was refused him. But a plain duty arose before him. He began to help a dull, coarse woman into a better life. When his disciples returned he seemed so satisfied that they thought he had both eaten and drunk, though he had done neither. He had only done with all his might the will of his Father, which was just then not that he should eat or drink, but that he should care for that woman. "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me."

XI.

SOCRATES.

I. It is hard for us to appreciate how intensely the ancient Greeks admired physical beauty. A fundamental conviction of the modern world is expressed in the phrase, "Handsome is that handsome does." Yet despite that deep and general conviction we are forced to recognize the power of comeliness. To an orator, a magnificent physique is a third part of his battle. Ahasuerus still feels the charm of Esther's loveliness, though he may not always surrender to its spell.

When we see a great genius like Alexander Pope warped by the consciousness of physical defects into a bitter misanthrope — made a torment to himself, a wasp to his friends — we know he ought to be above such folly. Yet few of us *are* "above such folly." It is not ladies only who understand the deep discomfort which lurks behind the exclamation, "I am not fit to be seen."

Perhaps there is no one of us who could live in a body such as Shakespeare has given to Richard III. without feeling the temptation to become such as Shakespeare has described him: —

"I, that am rudely stamped, and want love's majesty . . .
I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,
Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,
Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before my time
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,
And that so lamely and unfashionable
That dogs bark at me as I halt by them;
Why, I, in this weak piping time of peace,
Have no delight to pass away the time,
Unless to spy my shadow in the sun
And descant on mine own deformity:
And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover,
To entertain these fair well-spoken days,
I am determined to prove a villain,
And hate the idle pleasures of these days."

But Greek sentiment was best expressed, not in the phrase, "Handsome is that handsome does," but in this, "The beautiful is the good." More even than the Hebrews, the Greeks saw in physical defects signs of divine displeasure. Substitute for the English "un," "dis," its Greek equivalent, and the words resulting will express the difference between the English and Hellenic conceptions. "Ungrace," or "ungracefulness," becomes "disgrace," or ignominy.

Yet singularly enough the best and greatest Greek who ever lived; the son of an artist, himself an artist; the intimate friend of the most consummate artist the world has seen; trained from his cradle in an atmosphere of art; gifted by nature with a love of beauty which has never been surpassed in any poet; whose only known artistic creation was a marble group of "the Graces," was himself so exceptionally homely that Cleopatra and Antinous were not more conspicuous for beauty than was Socrates for its opposite. His friends called him "Silenus," and children in the streets jeered him as "the Satyr."

II. He was also poor. What that signifies we moderns understand. He might easily have been rich. But he refused to receive payment for the work he did. It was the most valuable work ever done on earth, excepting only that which was done by Jesus of Nazareth, and a few of those who have belonged to his "peculiar people." But he thought he could do it best if he refused to be paid for it, and in some way he had been taught to believe that money could make him neither stronger, nor better, nor happier than he was without it. Therefore he remained

poor; not so poor as Jesus Christ, for he had a place to lay his head; but poor as Paul was; poorer probably than any one who will read these words.

III. This man was always in the minority. He spent his time teaching and preaching truths which were unpopular. He was constantly trying to make men confess their sins; telling them to repent, for the kingdom of heaven was at hand. For this cause he was hated and slandered; smitten and buffeted in the streets, continually laughed to scorn. There were no comic papers in Athens. Their place was supplied by comic plays. Of these there were many writers. The wittiest and most reckless of them all was Aristophanes. Others followed his example, and so it became the custom, when anything was to be held up for ridicule, to personify it in the image of Socrates. His grotesquely homely face, familiar to every eye, was recognized instantly in the mask worn by the actor; and though there was a law in Athens against such things, his unpopularity made it safe for all to exercise their sarcasm at his expense. Year after year he was the butt of Athenian wits.

He was persistently misrepresented. He

was called "a corrupter of youth," as Christ was called "Beelzebub." No other man, save Jesus of Nazareth and a few of those inspired by him, has done so much as Socrates to make youths noble men. His sole business was "making men good." For this he resigned all that most men crave. Yet one of the indictments upon which he was executed read: "A corrupter of youth."

He was the devoutest man of his time. I do not except even Nehemiah. History affords no parallel to him in reverent obedience to "The High and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity," outside of those inspired by the special influences recorded in the Bible.

Yet the other indictment upon which he was put to death was "blasphemy;" the same accusation which was brought against the Saviour of the world.

IV. This man was also the most devoted patriot of whom history makes record, save him who wept over Jerusalem, and possibly Paul, the chief of his apostles. In his early manhood his country stood at the head of the human race. Athens was then the most splendid, the most admired, the most intellectual, the most cultivated, the most beau-

tiful city, by far, the world has ever seen. Socrates alone saw clearly the seeds of decay which were germinating in her state. For more than forty years he strove to pluck them out, but could get few, almost no one, to help him. Day and night he labored to save the state by making the people understand that it could be saved only by their becoming brave and good men. But he was compelled to see his efforts end in failure, until at last the city of his love lost her supremacy, her power, her independence, and descended from the throne to sit in the dust, the abject slave of dice-players who had won her crown. Inch by inch he was obliged to see her sun set, never to rise again. He alone saw the cause of her coming ruin ; he alone knew that it was certain and hopeless ; and he alone fought against it without for one moment relaxing his energies or yielding to despair.

V. He, too, had his Judas. The youth he loved best, and tried hardest to make a good man and a useful citizen ; the brilliant, the gifted, the wealthy, the fascinating Alcibiades stabbed him with the only dagger that could reach his heart — perfidy to his country. Alcibiades became a traitor, not

only to his teacher, but to Athens and to all that was good.

VI. We are accustomed to think that the supreme agony of Jesus Christ came to him when he uttered that cry which makes our hearts stop beating by its awful mystery: "My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me?"

All his life Socrates believed that he was under the immediate direction and protection of the God of righteousness.

He believed, and all who knew him knew he believed, that intimations of the divine will were frequently given him, and that if he obeyed them he could not go wrong or incur the divine displeasure. He refused to plead before his judges in a way that would have saved his life, though he knew that his life was the only barrier between Athens, which he loved next to righteousness, and ruin, — because the divine intimation forbade him so to plead. Yet after seventy years of such obedience he must die, and Athens must perish. "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

VII. He spent a long life in the single effort to be good and to make others good. He went to the rich and poor, the good and

bad, and talked with them, and gave up all for them.

I can understand how Francis d'Assisi resigned all the pleasures of life, gave up all that men count blessings, because he did it for Christ's sake. I can understand how Brébeuf smiled when Iroquois irons burnt his flesh and Iroquois tomahawks gashed it, because he believed Christ was watching; I can understand how Mrs. Ballington Booth can go into the slums and speak to the ribald outcasts there as to sisters, because she goes to tell them of Jesus Christ and believes he sees her.

But Socrates never heard of Christ. He steered across a sea, stormy and treacherous as theirs, and steered straight without the Star of Bethlehem to steer by. He taught men to bless those who despitefully used and persecuted them, though he never heard a word from the lips that said, "Forgive them, Father." He did all that Christians have done without the inspirations of a Christian.

I can explain this in but one way. The explanation, I believe, is this: he who said, "Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled," inspired this man in a special and excep-

tional way "to hunger and thirst after righteousness," that once in history there might be furnished a proof of the truth of his words which neither angel, man, nor devil could gainsay.

For this Socrates, if we may accept the testimony of his friends, or the testimony of his enemies; the testimony of those who tried to save his life, or of those who voted for his death; the testimony of the executioner who brought the poison to him, or of the few who saw him drink it and watched him die; if we may believe the witness of those who jeered him all his life, or of the few wise men who sat at his feet to learn his secret; this Silenus-faced Greek, so poor that his threadbare coat was a perpetual jest for fools; this noblest of educators condemned as "a corrupter of youth;" this devoutest of saints convicted of blasphemy; this patriot without a peer compelled to watch his country sink into infamy and fathomless woe; this most loyal of friends, stabbed by his Judas; this faithfulest of believers apparently forsaken of his God; this Christian who never heard of Christ, was, excepting the Lord Jesus, probably the happiest man who ever lived. He had nothing but his

hunger and thirst after righteousness to give him satisfaction, and he "was filled."

He was seventy years old when the persecutions he suffered for righteousness sake ripened into the following indictment brought before the Dicastery or Great Jury of Athens: "Socrates is guilty of crime; first, for not worshiping the gods whom the city worships, but introducing new divinities of his own; next, for corrupting the youth. The penalty is — death."

History records no utterance which for nobleness can be placed beside the speech, as Plato reports it, in which Socrates vindicated himself from this indictment. It cannot stand beside the words of Christ to the Sanhedrim or to Pilate, because those words rise so far above it. Nor can it be placed beside any other words spoken, on an occasion similar, because they all fall so far beneath it. When he had been condemned, as it was certain that he would be, because he refused to plead as a culprit for mercy, but held steadfastly the attitude of a censor, rebuking the sins of his accusers, he was told to suggest some penalty milder than death, as the jury might be satisfied with exile or a heavy fine.

This was his reply:[1] "And so Meletus proposes death as the penalty [I must suffer]. And what shall I propose on my part, men of Athens? Clearly that which is my due. And what is that which I ought to pay or to receive? What shall be done to the man who has never had the wit to be idle during his whole life, but has been careless of what the many care about, — wealth, and family interests, and military offices, and speaking in the assembly, and magistracies, and plots and parties. Reflecting that I was really too honest a man to follow in this way and live, I did not go where I could do no good to you or to myself; but where I could do the greatest good privately to every one of you, thither I went and sought to persuade every man among you that he must look to himself and seek virtue and wisdom before he looks to his private interests.

"What shall be done to such an one? Doubtless some good thing, O men of Athens, if he has his reward; and the good should be of a kind suitable to him. What would be a reward suitable to a poor man who is your benefactor, who desires leisure,

[1] Professor Jowett's translation.

that he may instruct you? There can be no more fitting reward than maintenance in the Prytaneum, O men of Athens, a reward which he deserves far more than the citizen who has won the prize at Olympia, in the horse or chariot race, whether the chariots were drawn by two horses or by many. For I am in want, and he has enough; and he only gives you the appearance of happiness, and I give you the reality. And if I am to estimate the penalty justly, I say that maintenance in the Prytaneum is the just return."

At this, of course, they gnashed their teeth upon him, as was done to a greater than he. But Socrates continued: —

"And now, O men who have condemned me, I would fain prophesy unto you; for I am about to die, and that is the hour in which men are gifted with prophetic power. And I prophesy to you who are my murderers, that immediately after my death, punishment, far heavier than you have inflicted upon me, will immediately await you. Me you have killed because you wanted to escape the accuser, and not to give an account of your lives. But that will not be as you suppose; far otherwise. . . . For if

you think that by killing me you can avoid the accuser censuring your lives, you are mistaken; that is not a way of escape which is either possible or honorable; the easiest and the noblest way is not to be crushing others, but to be improving yourselves. This is the prophecy which I utter before my departure, to the judges who have condemned me."

And was not that prophecy inspired by him who said to his judges, "Ye shall see the Son of Man coming upon the clouds of heaven with power and great glory"?

The night before his death a plan for his escape had been perfected by the friends of Socrates. He refused to profit by it, because "he would do nothing contrary to the laws of Athens."

When the end came a few friends were with him in the prison. One of them reported the arrival of the executioner who brought the cup of poison. "I remember the strange feeling which came over me," said that friend,[1] "for I could hardly believe that I was present at the death of a friend, and therefore I did not pity him; his mien and his language were so noble and fearless

[1] Jowett's *Phædo.*

in the hour of death that to me he seemed blessed. I thought that in going to the other world he could not be without a divine call, and that he would be happy if any man ever was when he arrived there; and therefore I did not pity him as might seem natural at such a time."

"I may and must pray to the gods," said Socrates, "to prosper my journey from this to that other world; may this, then, which is my prayer, be granted me."

"Then holding the cup to his lips," continues Phædo, "quite readily and cheerfully he drank off the poison. And hitherto most of us had been able to control our sorrow; but now when we saw him drinking, and saw too that he had finished the draught, we could no longer forbear, and in spite of myself my own tears were flowing fast; so that I covered my face and wept over myself, for certainly I was not weeping over him, but at the thought of my own calamity in having lost such a companion. Nor was I the first, for Krito, when he found himself unable to restrain his tears, had got up and moved away, and I followed; and at that moment Apollodorus, who had been weeping all the time, broke out into a loud cry

that made cowards of us all." (Does not this description help us to understand the occasion, and therefore better to appreciate the power, of the Master's words, "Let not your heart be troubled"?) "Socrates alone retained his calmness. 'What is this strange outcry?' he said. 'I sent away the women mainly that they might not offend in this way, for I have heard that a man should die in peace. Be quiet, then, and have patience.' When we heard that, we were ashamed, and refrained from tears; and he walked about until, as he said, his legs began to fail, and then he lay on his back, according to the directions, and the man who gave him the poison now and then looked at his feet and legs; and after a while he pressed his foot hard, and asked him if he could feel; and he said 'No;' and then his leg, and so upwards and upwards, and showed us that he was cold and stiff. And he felt them himself, and said, 'When the poison reaches the heart, that will be the end.' He was beginning to grow cold about the groin, when he uncovered his face, for he had covered himself up, and said (they were his last words), 'Krito, I owe a cock to Asclepius;

will you remember to pay the debt?' 'The debt shall be paid,' said Krito; 'is there anything else?' There was no answer to this question; but in a minute or two a movement was heard, and the attendants uncovered him. His eyes were set, and Krito closed his eyes and mouth."

XII.

MERCY.

"BLESSED are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

We have often heard men say: "God is merciful, but he is just." The words assume that justice is the enemy of mercy. They imply that the proper work of mercy is to deliver from the hands of justice; that Christ has done something which makes it possible for his Father to be merciful without being unjust.

The Scriptures seem to teach that God is merciful because he is just, and just because he is merciful. In the work of Christ they show the flower through which the root, justice, ripens into the fruit, mercy. Justice appears to be the sun shining through clouds; mercy the same sun when it has burned the clouds away.

A widely prevalent conception has been this: "One has done five pounds of sin; he must therefore suffer five pounds of

penalty." So only can justice be satisfied. But I can find no trace of such a sentiment in Jesus Christ. To say that he was ever gratified, that any feeling in him could be satisfied, by the sufferings of bad men, would seem to most of us blasphemy, to the rest of us calumny. On the contrary, when Jesus looked upon Jerusalem, which had become unspeakably wicked, the inhabitants of which were soon to commit the greatest of recorded crimes, he broke into loud lamentations because these sinners would have to endure the coming desolations. He who hath seen Christ hath seen the Father. Therefore it seems certain that there is not in God any sentiment which can take satisfaction by inflicting pain upon even the devil. "As I live," saith the Lord, "I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth." In other words there is not in God a trace of what we who have turned from the teachings of Christ to those of the great Roman jurist have been accustomed to call justice.

By the lexicon of Scripture justice appears to be as follows: A man does wrong; God cannot bear to have his child wicked; he will restrain the bad man's liberty, inflict

pain upon him, and never let him off until the man becomes good. To accomplish that end, he will suffer and die upon the cross. When the love of God works to save men by inflicting pain, the Bible calls it justice; when the same love works to the same end by suffering pain, the Bible calls it mercy.

The growth of the spirit of Christ in the world is measured by the degree in which this revelation of justice and mercy is accepted as true, and restored to the place which the false one has so successfully usurped.

The feeling toward a criminal, once universal, was: "He must be punished because he deserves to be." The feeling coming to be general is: "He must be punished because he needs to be." The man is wicked. By his crime he has shown that he is wicked. He must be treated in whatever way will tend most surely to prevent him from committing more crimes; to make him a blessing instead of a curse to his fellows, and also — if it be possible in consistency with the welfare of his fellows — to make him a blessing instead of a curse to himself. That is the meaning of all movements

toward prison reform since 1773. In proportion as the spirit of Christ permeates society the vindictive, retributive desire disappears, and its place is taken by the atoning spirit of him who spared not his own son but freely gave him for our offenses. A prisoner is arraigned for drunkenness or for treason. How long shall he be held? False justice replies, "Thirty days or thirty years, according to the enormity of his crime." True justice answers: "Until he is delivered from the sin his crime reveals, whether it be thirty days or thirty years." A man has the small-pox. How long shall he be kept in bed. "An hour or a minute for every pustule on his body," replies the old code. "Until he is well," says Christian science. A century ago English law treated alike the crime committed by a child of ten and the crime committed by a man of forty. Reform schools were the first step in the adoption of Christ's principle.

The above conception of mercy agrees with the original meaning of the word. It first signified giving sympathy; then giving alms; and grew at last into the larger meaning of giving whatever the recipient needs, whether he be pauper, millionaire, criminal,

or saint. So Christ used the word. So Christ's conduct exhibited the quality.

1. The word describes an active not a passive virtue. When a jury recommends a culprit to the mercy of the court, it means to express a hope that the judge will do less for him than the law allows. When God commends to mercy "one overtaken in a fault," he means us to do more. He means us to strain our powers in discovering what will benefit the culprit, and to use our utmost energy in giving him that, whether the thing he needs be pain or pleasure.

The child is committed to the mercy of its parents because it is their duty to do the most they can to make it what it should be.

"We are all in the hands of a merciful God." "His tender mercies are over all." "They will never fail." "They endure forever." Reflect for a moment what the Bible writers mean by such expressions. The Scriptures tell us that God made a beautiful world. It was so beautiful that he gazed upon it with an artist's rapture, and saw that it was "very good." In its choicest site he placed a garden, wherein he caused to grow every tree that was good

for food and pleasant to the eye. Here he put man, fed him, visited him, did all that could be done for him. The man sinned. The beautiful garden was no longer a place good for him. Therefore God cursed the ground for man's sake; made it bring forth thorns and thistles because they now were needed for the welfare of his child.

Then follows the history of God's "long-suffering" for sinful men. It is the history of a father dealing with wayward children, now restraining, now punishing, now gently remonstrating; kneeling at last in Gethsemane, hanging upon the cross, that so he may give always the thing needed, and so satisfy justice and mercy.

2. This conception of mercy gives the key to that problem which perplexes many when they read our Lord's commands about "giving." Our Lord's instructions may be almost summed up in that single word "give."

Acting upon those instructions the church for centuries made almsgiving the chief of Christian virtues. We appreciate the harm she did by that mistake. Wise lovers of men tell us the most serious obstacle they meet in their attempts to help the poor is the

indiscriminate giving of good people. But Christ said, "Give, give, give." He never warned us that we could give too much. Was he mistaken? Mr. Mill thinks he was. Mr. Spencer thinks he was. They have sought to remedy the evils produced by indiscriminate giving. They have not found the remedy, because they have thought Christ mistaken, and therefore have sought to find the remedy in withholding.

But Christian socialists like Mr. Gladden and Major Booth, who believe that Christ was not mistaken, are finding the remedy because they seek it in the direction in which he pointed. They tell us that the cure of the pauperism produced by giving is more liberal giving. We pauperize when we give cheap things; things that cost us little. We must give precious things; things that cost us not only money, but time and prayer, and sweat of heart and brain. That lazy brother asks for a dollar. You give it because he looks needy, and to give it gratifies yourself. Your cheap gift makes him lazier, needier, than it finds him. Suppose you had given him a part of yourself; given him enough of your time to discover that what he needs is industry, and

that hunger is helping him to that; enough of your time to "consider" until you love him a little, and can discern his necessities with vision purged by love. I do not remember that our Lord ever gave a penny to any one, and only twice did he give bread; but his time, his love, himself, he gave freely and to all. "Indiscriminate giving" pauperizes because it is unchristian. It substitutes the giving of a penny for the giving of a life.

3. "For they shall obtain mercy." That is not true if to be merciful means simply to remit pain or to bestow pleasure.

When children defy the laws of the household, the mother who always remits the penalty trains tormentors for herself.

A society which coddles its criminals and refuses to inflict pains upon them will obtain small mercy from its liberated jailbirds. Never to let them off until they become good men, were far kinder to them, far better for itself.

The principle is plain. Like begets like. Smite me in anger and I will wish to strike back. A blow for a blow; a kiss for a kiss. If we can make men appreciate that we are trying to do them good — and if we are

trying to help them they will generally discover the fact — they will wish to do us good.

But did Jesus of Nazareth, the only completely merciful one, himself obtain mercy? Yes, if the above definition of mercy is correct. For he gave to men always what they most needed, and obtained for himself the only thing he needed — the salvation of the world.

XIII.

KING ALFRED.

AMONG the treasures of the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford is a jewel which was found in 1693 at Newton Park, Somersetshire. It is a polished crystal two inches long and half an inch thick, oval shaped, but with one end fashioned to a point. It is held upon a gold backing by a framework of letters in beaten gold, through which the sides of the crystal appear. Upon the face of the gold backing, in cloisonnée enamel of green and yellow, sits a human figure holding lilies in each hand. Upon the obverse another flower is engraved. The pointed end of the jewel rests as the knob upon a cane, on a gold head which may have been meant for the head of a dolphin, a serpent, or a griffin. The letters which form the frame are Saxon, and read: "Alfred me ordered made."

This jewel is believed to have been the top of the sceptre held by the only Englishman

whom history has named "The Great." "There never, perhaps, was a monarch so highly esteemed as he," says the careful and cold Britannica. With one consent, our historians agree in characterizing him as "the wisest, best, and greatest king that ever reigned in England." He is called the "Darling" of the English, as the son of Jesse was named the "David" of the Israelitish people.

To him the early chroniclers attributed the origin of nearly everything they valued in English history, from trial by jury to pounds, shillings, and pence. But since critical studies have scattered the mists in which legend once clothed him, the man appears greater in the sunlight of fact than in the twilight of tradition.

Sharon Turner can find no words strong enough to describe his worth. Gibbon, the least impassioned among historians and the most miserly of praise, wrote: "Amid the deepest darkness of barbarism, the virtues of an Antoninus, the learning and valor of a Cæsar, and the legislative spirit of a Lycurgus, were manifested in this patriot king.[1]

[1] Quoted by Pauli, page 116, reference Gibbon's *Miscellaneous Works*, vol. iii., 3d ed., 1814.

Freeman affirms that Alfred "is the most perfect character in history. He is a singular instance of a hero who has become a hero of romance; who, as a hero of romance, has had countless imaginary exploits and imaginary institutions attributed to him, but to whose character romance has done no more than justice; and who appears in exactly the same lights in history and in fable. No other man on record has ever so thoroughly united all the virtues, both of the ruler and of the private man. In no other man on record were so many virtues disfigured by so little alloy. A saint without superstition; a scholar without ostentation; a warrior all of whose wars were fought in defense of his country; a conqueror whose laurels were never stained by cruelty; a prince never cast down by adversity, never lifted up to insolence in the hour of triumph, — there is no other name in history to compare with his." [1]

Dr. Pauli, whose "Life of Alfred" is the standard, even for Englishmen, places the Great King upon a pedestal no less exalted, and Wordsworth calls us to

[1] *Norman Conquest*, vol. i. p. 48.

"Behold a pupil of the monkish gown,
The pious Alfred, King to Justice dear,
Lord of the harp and liberating spear;
Mirror of princes! Indigent renown
Might search the starry ether for a crown
Equal to his deserts; who, like the year,
Pours forth his bounty; like the day doth cheer,
And awes like night with mercy-tempered frown.
Ease, from this noble miser of his time,
No moment steals. Pain narrows not his cares;
Small though his Kingdom, as a spark or gem,
Of Alfred boasts remote Jerusalem;
And Christian India, through her wide-spread realm,
In sacred converse gifts with Alfred shares."

Alfred was the only king on record who made the Bible the law of both his private life and his public administration, and Alfred was a supreme example of the biblical revelation of mercifulness. When it is said that Christ's teachings are not practical and will not satisfy the needs of business or of politics, a sufficient contradiction of the statement is the single word "Alfred."

He was born A. D. 849. His father was king of West Saxony, or Wessex. The England of his day had been partially christianized, but was rapidly relapsing into barbarism. The robber Danes had destroyed the monasteries — the only centres of civilization. They had murdered or scattered

the monks and brought back heathen worship and heathen customs.

Wessex alone they had not subdued, but they were pressing that little kingdom hard, — had already ravaged it with sword and fire, — when in 871 Alfred was elected king of the West Saxons. The familiar story, which Dr. Pauli thinks true, and Mr. Freeman thinks false, accurately describes his tastes. The boy was ten years old when his mother, after reading to all her children from a little volume, promised to give the book to the one who should first master its contents. In a surprisingly short time Alfred memorized all the book contained, repeated it to his mother, and received the desired treasure.

The story is only an emphatic way of reporting that the boy's tastes were literary. Choice would have made him a recluse. Another cause wrought in the same direction. He was an invalid. Throughout his life he was the victim of a painful malady which often made exertion agony. But in some way he became familiar with his Bible. How he learned it, no one can be sure; for the Bible had not been translated out of Latin, and Alfred could not yet read his

mother tongue, much less a foreign one. But he had friends who could. Them he induced to read to him in moments of leisure. Many a passage he learned by heart before he could read a word of it himself. His Bible taught him that he had not been placed in Wessex to do as he liked, but to do what the West Saxons needed to have done.

I. What they needed most imperatively was a soldier who could keep Danish spears out of their hearts and Danish yokes off their necks. There was small hope of their getting such a soldier till Alfred made himself the man. Ten years he fought the robbers. They drove him from his throne; they captured his kingdom; they forced him to hide with a handful of followers in that inaccessible marsh where he probably dropped the jewel from his sceptre. If at this time of apparently hopeless defeat he had lost heart and fled to Rome, whither ease and proffered honors called him, "there would never have been," says an able historian, "any England or any Englishmen." But he did not lose heart. He fought on until he had beaten the Danes on land. Still they kept raiding from the sea. England

had no ships to meet them. Therefore Alfred made ships, manned them, whipped the Danes on their own element; gained the first of those victories which Nelson continued in "Egypt, Hafnia, Trafalgar," and America carried on in the ship whose "tattered standard waved" so long on high; whipped the Danes so thoroughly that they gave up invading England at once and forever, and in the future, passing that little island as hunters pass a hornet's nest, followed their terrible Hastings and Côté de Fer, to seek easier work in ravaging France, Italy, and Asia Minor. So the little island — a kaleidoscope of Celts, Romans, Saxons, and Danes — began to become England.

II. But the island was yet far from being "Mighty England," or even "Merrie England." Alfred's country was full of robbers who had been taught their trade by the bloodthirsty, thieving Danes. These had settled among them and proved worse as neighbors than they had been as open foes. The old laws were disregarded, and "every man did that which was right in his own eyes," which meant in Wessex, as it had meant in Judea, "that which is wrong in the eyes of other people." What England

now needed was salutary laws, so Alfred set himself to give them to her.

He knew where such laws could be found. He can read his Bible now, can read it for himself in plain Latin. He is a loyal child of the Church. His gifts to her were larger relatively to his wealth — larger absolutely, it seems — than those of any other ruler in his century. Half his revenues are bestowed to support the institutions of religion. But that does not mean that he will take any man's sayings — not even the pope's — in place of the sayings of his Bible. He has tested that book and found it true. What has proved good for the king must be good for the people, he thinks. So he begins his code with the ten commandments, and with chapters selected from Exodus ; quoting from the Sermon on the Mount to show the spirit in which all must be interpreted and administered. Thus he anticipated by centuries Wycliff and Luther, and — what no other monarch has ever dared to do — trusted the teachings of Christ sufficiently to govern by them. Thus he caused English laws to be pervaded by the spirit of the Bible, and started that influence which distinguishes English thought and English literature.

For the characteristic which distinguishes English literature from all others is the degree in which it is saturated with the Bible. The great books of our language cannot be mastered by one who does not know the Scriptures. Shakespeare is the best commentary in existence upon both the Old Testament and the New, because Alfred made the Bible the root of English law, English culture, English customs, and English literature.

But what can the most salutary laws effect without men just and able to enforce them? "Nothing," answered Alfred, quoting Solomon and Isaiah. England needs such men for leaders and judges. Therefore Alfred will endeavor to procure them.

He requires that every noble shall learn to read; requires that every official shall master the knowledge demanded by his office, or resign his place. He compels bishops, earls, ministers, to exert themselves for the common benefit. If they are too dull or too old to learn reading, they must hire others to read to them. So many a scribe may now be seen reading aloud, reading slowly, repeating the sentences over and over, until the old men who are listening

have them by heart, and so are qualified to pass the "civil-service examinations." For without passing them they cannot keep their places. And so it has come to pass that, according to tradition, gold bracelets hang the year round untouched in conspicuous places, because thieves are afraid to ply their trade.

III. But something more is needed by Wessex men. Alfred has learned why the Danes were able to efface civilization so easily. It was because instruction had been confined to the Latin language, and therefore given only to the favored few. Knowledge must be given to the people. They must have books and they must be taught to read them. So the king undertakes that task. He was not a great writer. He knew that he was not. But there were great writers, and he could make them known. Sure of that fact, he translated into Saxon an amount of literature which would have justified us in calling him a busy man if literature had been his only business. By munificent gifts he called to his aid the first scholars in Europe, and made his little kingdom as conspicuous for light as it had been for darkness.

IV. England has still another need. Alfred knew, because he knew his Bible, that it is not good for men to dwell alone; that isolation is barbarism.

The oyster never goes beyond its shell, and continues an oyster. But the characteristic of Englishmen is the opposite of that. They are the world's explorers. Alfred taught them the lesson they have learned so well. He first sent geographical expeditions to explore the northern seas; to visit distant India; to carry gifts not only to the pope, but also to the Christians in Jerusalem, and to those of whom he had heard in Hindostan.

The man who never looks beyond his own door will lose the power of seeing correctly the faces of his own children. "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." Alfred read and obeyed. Who shall say how largely the influence of his personality has been effective in creating that empire "upon which the sun never sets." For his influence did not cease at his death. It continued to work through his children and his children's children, so that Mr. Freeman feels justified in saying: "The West Saxon kings for nearly a hundred years

after him formed one of the most brilliant royal lines on record."

V. The remark just quoted brings to mind the most precious inheritance we have received from our Teuton fathers — the hearthstone. Alfred made it the foundation of the Christian home.

If an artist were required to paint two pictures which should contrast most vividly the false and the true in men's conceptions of power; which should bring into sharpest comparison Napoleon's ideal of effectiveness and that held before us by Jesus Christ, both pictures might be Christmas scenes. The first should represent Charlemagne in the Cathedral at Rome on the first Christmas-Day of the ninth century, kneeling amid splendor and pomp the most august that earth can furnish; while the pope places upon his head the imperial crown, gives him a sword, and tells him with that to defend and perpetuate the "Holy Roman Empire, which God has intrusted to his care."

That empire included nearly all of Christendom — practically all of it — except the little island where Alfred ruled. In a generation, despite the colossal genius of Charle-

magne and his enormous military power, his empire began to fall into fragments which fought each other, and are fighting each other still.

Seventy years later, Alfred, with his "few people" in a small island divided among a dozen hostile communities which belong to five or six different nationalities, with his Bible in his bosom, undertook by it to defend and to perpetuate the little kingdom which God had intrusted to his care. Peace began to appear. The kingdom grew. All the fighting kingdoms in the island became one with it. Still it grew, until men of every climate and longitude have found safety within its limits. We have marked some of the means by which this result was accomplished. But the most effective of them we may perhaps discern by watching him on a Christmas-Day.

Whether it were he who gave England the twelve holidays, I do not know. But this is sure, at Christmas-time — as at all times when it could be done — Alfred shared in person the play and pleasures of his subjects, taught them to deal kindly with each other, and to make their homes the centre of their joys. It was he who taught English-

men to count "wife" and "mother" the noblest words after "God," because true wife and mother most reveal the character of God. It was he who so lived that, while all his people loved him, no others loved him as his wife and children did. It was he who amid all his cares found time to pray for his children and with them; to teach them, to train them so that, when he was taken to his reward, the crown of that reward may well have been found in watching from the upper chamber of his Father's house their conversation in its lower mansion.

These were the great king's last words to his heir: "And thou, my dear son, sit thee now beside me, and I will deliver unto thee true instructions. My son, I feel that my hour is coming, my countenance is wan. My days are almost done. We must now part. I shall to another world, and thou shalt be left alone in all my wealth. I pray thee (for thou art my dear child), strive to be a father and a lord to thy people. Be thou the children's father and the widow's friend, comfort thou the poor, and shelter the weak, and, with all thy might, right that which is wrong, and, son, govern thyself by law. Then shall the Lord love

thee, and God above all things shall be thy reward. Call thou upon him to advise thee in all thy need, and so shall he help thee the better to compass that which thou wouldest."

XIV.

SEEING GOD.

"BLESSED are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Of our five senses, sight is accounted the most trustworthy. Men say, "I must believe my eyes." "Seeing is believing."

For this reason sight has come to stand figuratively for direct and accurate perception. "To see" means not only to discern a material object, but also to apprehend a verity. We say, "I see your reasons." "I see your meaning." "I see the hidden springs of his character." "I see him who is invisible." When you have ceased to doubt a proposition, you say, "I see its truth."

So Christ used the word in this beatitude. By so using it, he contradicted the views of nearly every philosopher and theologian who has ever lived, excepting those we call inspired. He contradicted your views and mine. For unless I am greatly mistaken

you are like me in this. There come times when you wish you could be as sure of God's existence as you are of tables and chairs, and the sun in the sky. You welcome eagerly books like Professor Drummond's "Natural Law in the Spiritual World," because you think they will help you believe in God. You were cheered when you heard Mr. Spencer had decided that there is a God, even though we cannot know him, and that Professor Fiske believed we might even say "Our Father" without being fools. Theologians and philosophers begin their books with attempts to prove or to disprove the existence of God. The first question asked by presbyteries and councils when they examine candidates for licensure is, "How do you prove the existence of God?" When you who are Christians meet men who are troubled with doubts of the divine being, you look about for arguments to efface their doubts.

This is only a long way of saying that we feel, and most men feel, there are things more certain and more obvious than the being of God, and that from them we must deduce the fact of God's existence. Every one knows that the sun is in the sky and the

dew is on the grass. From these and other conceded facts we try to infer convincingly the divine existence. But the Bible makes no attempt to prove that there is a God. Christ makes none. He assumes that God is the one certain and obvious fact; that men may know him as they know that two and two are four. It would not be opposed to Christ's method if one should undertake to prove that the sun is in the sky because God exists. It would contradict Christ's method if one should try to prove that God exists because the sun is in the sky. Other facts are secondary and may be inferred with varying degrees of probability. God is primary and may be known.

I. Men have an organ by which they can see God.

It is like this. I look through my glasses. I cannot see you. I see nothing. The philosophers try to convince me of your presence. They tell me to listen and I shall hear you speak. I reply that what they call a voice sounds to me like something else. Then they bid me feel. But touch does not convince me. The most I can infer is a probability that you are present.

Christ's method, on the other hand, says: "If you do not see the man before you, your glasses are foul. Clean them and you will see him, for he is there. When they are clean you will not suspect, nor hope, nor think, nor believe; you will know. The glasses, the organ, through which alone this direct knowledge can come, is the heart; that is, the affections, the moral sentiments. When they are right you will see God. When they are foul you cannot see him, for no one can see through glasses covered with grime."

Men come to doubt the existence of God because they try to see him with the wrong organs, as if they should try to see a picture with their thumbs.

1. Some of us are half atheists because we have expected to see God with our eyes, that is, with our physical senses.

Men have searched the stars with telescopes, and have not found him; the rocks with microscopes and have not found him; chemistry, biology, and the like, have not revealed him. Failing to find him by these methods, they have told us he is not. We have half believed them and are troubled. If a child told you he had watched the stars

and could not see God among them, you would smile. If he declared seriously that he had put on spectacles, and even with their help had failed to find him, you would laugh. But when astronomers and physicists tell us they have looked through telescopes and microscopes and chemistry and biology, and seen no God, therefore there is no God, or if he is we cannot know him, we forget that these things are only spectacles, and are frightened. The agnosticism of our day is the blunder of a child who expects to see a spirit by getting lenses of larger magnifying power.

2. Others have tried to see God through their brains.

They have reasoned thus: "There must be a God to explain this and that. We see so many things that imply a wise designer and a loving will. Look at the human hand and its adaptation to its uses. Look at the sunlight and the joy of life. These imply the existence of a Father who makes the sun shine and the babies laugh."

But the reply is ready: "We see so many signs which point the other way. By causes beyond human control a man is put where the salvation of a nation appears to depend

upon his wisdom and he proves a fool. That does not look like the work of a God.

"You see the sun shine and hear the babies laugh. But I live in a ghastly cellar where the sun never shines and the babies never laugh. There are more of us than of you. These things do not seem to me like the doings of a God."

So the scales of argument see-saw up and down. To-day when the cricket chirps upon my hearth, I believe in God. To-morrow when death sweeps the stars from my sky, God goes with them. What help for me in the storm and stress of life from reasonings like these? They are swept away by the inspired question: "Who by searching can find God?" Do you expect me to trust a Father who has left me to discover his existence by balancing arguments?

II. Not so do we find him in whom we live and move and have our being. By keeping our hearts pure, by cherishing right affections, by loving what we know we ought to love, hating what we know we ought to hate, in that, and in no other way, can we see God. To be sure of this, one has only to make the experiment. We know we ought to love our neighbors as ourselves. Those who do that

see God. Those who try to do it begin to see him. History is thronged with illustrations. George Eliot was one of the strongest intellects of England. She was trained to believe in God, in Christ, in Immortality. She lost faith in all three and spread an atmosphere of desperate doubt wherever her influence extended. The facts which destroyed her faith were these. The misery, the disappointments, the hopelessness of human life. "How can there be a good God, and so much misery permitted?" But George Eliot never set herself with all her heart to relieve the misery which made her moan. She never touched it. She sat apart and speculated about it.

Look at another novelist of her time. George MacDonald has seen more of human misery than George Eliot saw. But he has treated it as a man treats a sore on his own body. He has used his force in trying to relieve it. He has loved his neighbor as one serves himself. And George MacDonald sees God. Of no other fact does he seem to be so sure.

These are single types of classes. The Schopenhauers who cannot believe in God, because there is so much misery, are the

men who know comparatively little of that misery; who stand aloof and prate of it. The Booths, who are sure of God, are the men who get closest to the misery in their efforts to relieve it. They are the ones who have most reason to doubt the existence of God, because they appreciate most keenly the horror of the sin and suffering that he has not abolished. But those who do thus purify their hearts, see God, as men see sunlight when they open their eyes at noonday.

Find a man who is cold, sordid, mean. A man who has cared for little but money, until his religion — all that has to do with Christ and his Father — is to him as the fairy tales he believed in his childhood. But whenever such a man goes to his home, takes his child upon his knee and tries to make her happy, while he is doing that, the Father in heaven, and the story of the gospels, begin to seem to him less unreal.

III. Christ's meaning in this beatitude is made certain by those other words he spoke: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Two things, each equal to a third, are equal to each other. The pure in heart see God. They who saw Christ

saw God. Therefore those who saw Christ were the pure in heart.

And who did see Jesus Christ? Not all whose eyes beheld, whose hands touched his body. There were many such. Few saw him.

In Christ's body Caiaphas saw a traitor to his country; the demoniacs saw a fiend who had come to torment them before their time; many of the Pharisees saw Beelzebub. But they who were enough like him to see him as he was saw, he declared, the Father. It was just as hard and just as easy to see Christ as it is to see God.

If any man says, "I cannot pray! I have lost faith in God! I can scarcely believe that he is. How can I find him?" the answer is, "Thus you may find him. It matters little whether you think you believe in God or not, if you cannot pray. Do not stop even to inquire whether such a man as Jesus Christ ever lived. The character of Jesus Christ is in the New Testament. Of that there can be no question. You can learn to love that character. If you do you will see God. But mind, you must love it; not merely pretend to love it, not merely fancy you love it, deceiving your own soul.

You have heard men in prayer-meeting sing, "Oh! how I love Jesus," and act, or speak, within half an hour, in a way that showed they could not have passed a day with such a man without gnashing their teeth upon him. To love truth is to be truthful. If I said I loved the truth, and told lies, you would know I deceived myself or tried to deceive you. To love Christ is to try to be like him. If you do that you will see God according to the promise, "If any man love me he will keep my commandments, and I and my Father will make our abode with him."

For all pure, all right, all natural affections find their fullest exercise in loving him; and these affections are the organ by which, and by which alone, men see God.

"Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I know that thou hearest me always."

XV.

GEORGE FOX.

We are living in a troubled time. There are wars and rumors of wars; theological controversies; civil commotions; industrial conflicts. These we have striven to adjust by various military expedients; by anathemas and trials for heresy; by strikes, and by lockouts; by help of Mr. Pinkerton and State Militia, and stamp of federal authority. Our success has not been conspicuous. A few watchers think they have seen gleams of the sign of the Son of Man in the darkening sky. They are beginning to suspect that peace and happiness will not come of loving ourselves and hating our neighbors, even by grace of Mr. Pinkerton. That what we all long for can come only through our seeing God so clearly that we shall be moved to try the keeping of his commandments, by loving our neighbors as ourselves. Such observers may find encouragement in pondering the experience of one, who in a

time of turmoil, greater than the present, thought as they do, and acted as he thought.

On a winter's day, of the year 1651, a tall, strongly built, and singularly handsome man, of grave and dignified appearance, was seen approaching on foot the city of Lichfield, which lies near the centre of England. He wore a broadbrimmed hat and a long coat of tanned leather. When the three tall spires of the great cathedral caught his eye, he stopped, dismissed the few companions who were with him, and stood for a moment alone, silently praying. Then he moved forward again, but slowly, as if deliberating, until he reached a group of shepherds keeping watch over their flocks. Beside the shepherds he paused once more. His actions were peculiar, but in his face was an expression which awed the shepherds so that they durst not ask him any questions, while he took off his shoes, gave them to the shepherds, and resumed his march toward the city. Having entered it, he walked barefoot through its main street and marketplace, crying, in a strong, sweet voice, "Woe to the bloody city! Woe to the bloody city!"

This man was George Fox, founder of the

society called, by its members, "Friends;" by those who hated and strove to crush it, "Quakers." He and his followers appear to have been the only "locked-out" men in England who, during that century when strikes were universal, practiced the Master's method.

Lord Macaulay, with his unique ability of seeing at a glance the whole surface of everything, and his more limited ability to see beneath the surface of anything, has branded this act of Fox as a pitiful exhibition of half-crazed and half-hypocritical fanaticism. Other historians, more sagacious because more sympathetic, have endeavored to excuse it as the act of an untrained and ignorant man mistaking his whimsies for the inspirations of the Almighty.

To me it seems one of the finest deeds done anywhere during the seventeenth century. Rightly understood, I believe it reveals the true character of Fox; explains the marvelous influence exerted by "The Friends;" gives the key to a correct understanding of that tumultuous age in which Cromwell is assumed to have been the strongest force, and enables us to compre-

hend, more accurately than most of us do, the perplexing period in which we are living to-day. For that walk seems closely akin to the deeds for which Mr. Garrison and Mr. Phillips have been canonized. Let us try to understand it.

Fox knew that he risked his liberty, and perhaps his life, by that walk through the cathedral city.

All men whose opinions are worth minding are at last agreed that he was exceptionally free from vanity and love of display; that he was honest and devoted in his love both to God and man; that he can be justly charged with no reproach unless it be fanaticism; and that he possessed a power, rarely equaled, of influencing men. Keeping in mind these facts, which have been repeated often and cannot now be safely denied, put beside them these: —

Fox believed that violence and bloodshed, especially when practiced in the cause of religion, were the worst of crimes. England had adopted the creed that violence and bloodshed, especially when practiced in the cause of religion, were the best of virtues. Within seven years she had witnessed and approved Edgehill, Marston Moor, Naseby.

and the execution of her king. She had been calloused by a host of deeds of which these may serve for a rapid index. England was ruled by an iron government which had fought its way to power in the name of the Lord, and still maintained itself by arms while a large number of Englishmen planned its overthrow by assassination.

At such a crisis Fox arrived at Lichfield.

There a tradition prevailed — false, it is true, but believed by him, and believed by the inhabitants of the place — that a thousand years before his time a multitude of Christians had been massacred for their faith, on the spot where the cathedral stood. Its spires may well have seemed to him trees watered by the blood of men, murdered in the name of religion. He had been bred a shepherd. The sight of shepherds keeping watch over their flocks may easily have turned his thoughts to the Almighty Shepherd protecting his "little ones," so that the cathedral spires, — trees watered with blood, — silent to others, could say to him, what the presence of the shepherds had made his mind alert to hear: "Where is the city that shed blood? For-

gotten and covered up by the city whose blood was shed. That is the lesson England needs to learn. Go preach it. Give voice to the writing of God upon those towers. Cry 'Woe to the Bloody City.'"

I do not mean to imply that Fox reasoned this out as I have done, — in his journal he declares that he did not at the time understand what he was doing, — but that with a prophet's intuition he felt it.

With exquisite sagacity he chose the most effective method of enforcing his message. He knew that the party in power, indifferent as it was to the spirit of the Bible, worshiped the letter of the Bible with a more than pagan idolatry. He knew it christened its children with proof-texts, and made the customs, and even the crimes of the Jews, recorded in the Old Testament, the standards of morals and religion. He knew such men would give to the symbolic actions of a Hebrew prophet a heed they would not give to literal speech. Therefore he took off his shoes as Moses, and cried as Nahum or Jonah might have done. The wisdom of his judgment was proved by its results. For — what could not have been expected or scarcely hoped —

on this one occasion he was not molested, but wrote in his journal with evident surprise: "The word of the Lord burned in me like fire, but no man laid hand upon me."

Three things he had accomplished. He had obeyed, at personal risk, what he believed to be the command of God. He had asserted his right to follow his conscience. He had protested in such wise as was possible to him against bloodshed and violence.

This deed was an epitome of the career of Fox; of the history of "The Friends;" of the essential life of the seventeenth century.

The sixteenth century, with its Luthers and Loyolas, was the spring ploughing which prepared for the replanting and cultivating in human consciousness of three truths which Christ declared to be foundations of Christianity, but which had long been either wholly forgotten or treated as devil's lies, and which are still but partially acknowledged among even the most enlightened men. They were these: —

(1.) That every man is accountable to God and to God alone for his beliefs.

(2.) That salvation consists in loving God and keeping his commandments, and in nothing else.

(3.) That force must never be employed to extend or to defend religious opinions.

The seventeenth century contributed more than any other, except the first, to establish these three truths as the convictions of Christendom. Fox and his followers were, during that period, their most powerful exponents in England.

A few facts, viewed as chips in a slow current, will show the movement of the century.

I. In the year 1600, Giordano Bruno — probably the most brilliant thinker, save one, then living — was burned by the Inquisition at Rome. He had spent nine years in prison at Venice and two more at Rome; he had easily vanquished in public disputation every theologian who had ventured to appear against him; he had been granted eight days in which to repent of his brains, his honesty, his manliness; to confess that his opinions were false and his words not only false but impious; he had refused to recant a syllable until it should be proved untrue, when he was excommunicated and sentenced to be burned. Held by force upon his knees in presence of pope and cardinals, he received the sentence with this significant

reply: "Probably this sentence gives more alarm to you than it gives to me."

The execution of Bruno excited small surprise in Europe. The right of private judgment was conceded by Protestants as little as by Catholics. Had he possessed the power, Luther would have excommunicated Zwinglius for holding an opinion of the Lord's Supper different from his own. Calvin could not conceive it possible that one should protest against his administration without justly forfeiting his life. The principle of authority prevailed everywhere. True, the pope had been banished from a large part of Christendom, but only to have his place supplied by a multitude of little popes. There were Lutherans, Calvinists, Church of England men, Presbyterians, Independents, Anabaptists, Ranters, and others still, each sect believing itself more infallible than the pope had even claimed to be. Sixty years after Bruno was burned at Rome, for interfering with the Roman Catholic faith, two "Quakers," William Robinson and Marmaduke Stevenson, were executed on Boston Common for interfering with the worship of a Protestant sect.

The first year of the century saw Bruno

burned for his opinions. The last year of the century saw in Old England the censorship of the press withdrawn; in New England, a "Quaker" meeting-house standing undisturbed in the heart of Boston; while on the continent of Europe, men were permitted to accept what Galileo, Kepler, and Newton had discovered without fear of scaffold, stake, or prison. So far did the century advance toward liberty of conscience.

Still priestcraft — both Catholic and Protestant — insisted that freedom of faith begets license of conduct, and that intellect is the parent of irreligion, though the one chaste man in Athens was Socrates, and he who wrote, "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free," was Paul. But priestcraft had grown decrepit. It was going the way of Giant Despair, who, like certain ecclesiastical bodies of our time, was subject to fits in sunshiny weather.

II. In 1634, an appalling pestilence devastated southern Bavaria. The terrified peasants, since they had never been taught or allowed to think for themselves, turned to the wisest and best men they knew for counsel how to stay the plague. They were advised by their religious teachers to appease

the wrath of God by performing in his honor a religious drama. Therefore, among the mountains south of Munich, they built a theatre which seated 6,000 spectators; selected the fairest peasant they could find to represent the Saviour, and with all the pomp their meagre means allowed, performed at Oberammergau that tragedy of Calvary, which at intervals of ten years, has been repeated until our own day. By it the plague was not stayed, the people were not saved.

The same year, 1634, a still more devastating pestilence attacked the Huron Indians near the place where Detroit now stands. They also turned to their religious teacher for counsel how to stay the plague. That teacher was — if judged by the standard given in the Sermon on the Mount — one of the greatest men who have trod the western continent. His name was Brébeuf. When the Indians asked him what they should do to appease the wrath of God and stay the plague, he answered: "Clean your wigwams; abolish your cannibal feasts; renounce polygamy."

The play at Oberammergau and these words of Brébeuf were special forms of the two replies — the only two which have ever

been given among men — to the question, "What shall I do to be saved?"

The false answer, given by the monks of the Tyrol, was this: "You can be religious without being good!"

That there must be some way of procuring God's favor easier than keeping his commandments; that they could be filled without hungering after righteousness, men have always been eager to believe. Giving the first fruit of the body for the sin of the soul; building synagogues or cathedrals; doing painful penances; accepting this or that system of theology; saying "Amen" to some cherished creed; bestowing one's goods to feed the poor; giving one's body to be burned; saying long prayers at home, or going to church on Sabbath days, — these things may be hard, but they are not nearly so hard as loving God with all the heart and one's neighbor as one's self. "There must be some way of getting to heaven easier than that," says the selfish human heart, which, in comparison with itself, hates both God and its neighbor. "Help us to find the easier way. We will gladly hang on hooks, if only we may escape acknowledging the truth. We will give millions of money to build

synagogues and temples if we may go on hating our enemies, cursing those who curse us, and doing evil to those who despitefully use us and persecute us."

Priestcraft is the supply to this demand.

Much of what has passed and still passes for religion is only some dexterous device for reaching heaven by another than the steep and narrow way. But Jesus Christ, — revealed in the clouds of heaven and the fires of earth; heard in the wars and rumors of wars, which make men's hearts fail them for fear; seen in the wan faces of children starving for bread, and in the heavy eyes of rich men's sons who are rotten before they are ripe; witnessed by what comes of the truculent blasphemies of anarchist demagogues and the careless levity of millionaires yachting above Niagara, — Jesus Christ still repeats what he has said from the beginning, "Money cannot save you; ironclads cannot save you; old creeds cannot save you; new ones cannot save you. Keep the commandments. I have not come to let you off, but to help you on, in doing that."

III. The seventeenth century was the century of religious wars. Wallenstein and Gustavus Adolphus; Tilly and Condé;

Hampton and Prince Rupert; Fairfax and Cromwell, — all fought for religion. By their fighting they changed no man's creed one jot except in the way of making him more stubborn or more obstinate in holding it. Yet none of these warriors suspected, any more than the industrial champions of to-day suspect, that he was not going about the right and only way of establishing God's kingdom on earth.

Before the century closed, Europe had, from some source, learned to fight no more wars for religion. She had learned even more. She had come to feel, though vaguely, that peace was better, more honorable, than war. That sentiment began to appear which was well expressed by General Grant when he laid his hand upon the 100-ton gun, cast for the Italian government, and proposed the health of Sir William Armstrong, "inventor of the most powerful peace-compelling implement the world has ever seen." This sentiment was rooted in England by the events of the seventeenth century.

The great changes which occurred in English sentiment during that period were produced by causes as subtle as they were potent. Causes, the sufficiency of which will

be conceded only by those who believe that mind is mightier than matter; the pen more powerful than the sword; that the word of God created, and still controls, the world.

During the first five years of the century appeared the three most democratic and revolutionary books — excepting the Bible — which have ever been published. The first of them appeared in Spain. It was the Don Quixote of Cervantes. It set the world laughing at the sham aristocracies and mock heroisms before which it had bowed as idolaters bow before a deserted shrine. It lifted, in all men's esteem, the truths which, until they were petrified and honeycombed by pride, had given worth to the things which had become sham aristocracies and mock heroisms. It did more. England was in close relations with Spain, and the thoughts of the great Spaniard — which long after they were uttered inspired Walter Scott to write the Waverley novels and so to purify the lighter literature of England — coöperated with Shakespeare in turning the English mind away from the worship of that which was false and artificial, and bringing it into sympathy with all that was natural and true.

In 1602, the completed Hamlet was pub-

lished. It is named here as representative of all Shakespeare's work. More than any other writings, since the first century, those dramas tended to undermine that falsehood which it was a part of the business of the seventeenth century to destroy, namely, the falsehood that monarchs have a right to do wrong; falsehood baptized, not in water, but in blood, "the divine right of kings." For Hamlet forces men to realize, while scarcely knowing that they do so,— what almost no man had realized until Shakespeare wrote, — that kings and queens are only men and women, sharing all the passions, the weaknesses, the strengths, of their subjects, and as inexorably bound by God's laws as the poorest peasants are; that "all the divinity that doth hedge a king" is no stronger defense against the results of wrongdoing, or even against the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," than was the arras tapestry against the rapier of Hamlet.

The same five years saw the publication of Bacon's "Advancement of Human Learning," which taught men to feel it not only their right, but their duty, to look with eyes undimmed by church or creed at all things which the Lord God had created and made:

a book which in due time made it possible for Newton to open the heavens, Watt the air, Lyell the earth, and Darwin animal life, so that we now can read in every realm of nature the writing of the hand that was pierced, and discern that without it was not anything made that was made.

In 1611 was issued the authorized version of the Bible, which is the Magna Charta of the people. That made possible "The Paradise Lost" in 1667, and "The Pilgrim's Progress" in 1678. The splendor of these last-named books, and the stupendous influences they have exerted upon the English mind, lie, not in their theology, but in the fact that they popularized the Bible and impressed — the one upon the cultivated, the other upon all men — the three great truths which God was chiefly teaching England during the century in which they appeared. These truths they taught at times unwittingly but always vigorously, because the fictions were obliged to follow the facts set forth in Scripture by the life and death of Jesus Christ.

This brief review of what seem to me the most effective causes which moved the English mind during the seventeenth century

does not mention Cromwell, nor his Ironsides, nor the Commonwealth, nor the Westminster divines, nor the Mayflower. All these seem to me notable effects, but not causes. To one who believes that Christ's kingdom must be advanced, not by the sword but in spite of the sword, and that the spirit of the Bible working through the authorized version, in coöperation with Shakespeare, Bacon, Milton, and Bunyan, exerted an influence more potent and more permanent by far than Cromwell's guns or the Assemblies' catechism, most of what are generally accounted the formative influences of the seventeenth century appear little more than the rattling of branches against the window-pane, which children mistake for the cause of the storm because the currents which sway the branches are invisible. All successful reforms have come of believing the teachings of Jesus Christ. All bloodshed and failure in reforms have come of disbelieving or believing only a fraction of those teachings. The influences which have saved the world from the riot and shame of pagan Rome flowed, not from the destruction of Jerusalem and the slaughter of 1,100,000 representatives of those who crucified the

Lord; nor from the superb procession in which the conqueror of the crucifiers swept up the seven hills; nor from the august display by which Constantine advertised his conversion to the service of the Crucified. These were, at best, but indirect effects, and each one of them appears to have been a hindrance in the sweep of that irresistible stream of influence, which flowed from an upper chamber in Jerusalem, so inconspicuous that no man cared to listen at its door or peer through its windows; from the procession of one who had ridden toward it unnoticed by the great ones of the earth; and from the fact that four men, of whose names we cannot be sure, wrote four little books which tell us what he did and said.

There is no book in the New Testament which has not exerted an influence upon our race stronger than the armies of Napoleon wielded. The thirteenth of Corinthians will sway the minds of men when they shall have forgotten that the Westminster Confession ever existed.

This is only a way of saying with some detail that what gave to England the new life she received in the seventeenth century was the Bible. The so-called reformers started

in the spirit of the Scriptures. They tripped over the letter of the Old Testament and dropped the torch given them to light the nation. But Shakespeare, Bacon, Milton, and others, obscure in comparison with them, carried it steadily forward.

More completely than any other man of his time, George Fox was the incarnation of the three convictions God was working into the consciousness of England. He was born and bred a member of the Episcopal Church. The son of a weaver, he received no education beyond reading and writing. From his earliest years he was distinguished for the purity of his life, the modesty and sweetness of his disposition. Keeping sheep was his occupation, reading the Bible his study and his recreation. From childhood he sought no other pleasures.

He was nearly eighteen, when, in 1643, he became greatly exercised for the salvation of his soul. He felt the need of guidance. He applied for it, first, to the religious teachers in his own church, then to those of other sects. One told him to smoke tobacco. Another to sing psalms; a third to try bleeding. None gave him help, but each affirmed that all the other sects were wrong.

He grew bewildered. What was the truth? where could he find it?

Suddenly, while he studied his Bible alone in the fields, the conviction came to him that God was not far off; that God was guiding him even in the darkness. England was rent by many sects, each diabolically in earnest to have its own way; each infallible in its own conceit; each grounding its peculiar tenets upon the Bible; each certain that all the others were children of Satan who ought to be suppressed by force, when the three truths, toward which the century was blindly groping, became luminous to Fox.

I. He must obey God. That and that alone was needful. To do God's will — whatever the cost — was true religion. Nothing was of value except so far as it helped men to do that in spirit and truth. Churches, sacraments, rituals, creeds; all the things which men had put in the place of simple obedience, and about which they had fought so savagely, were trifles.

II. But how could he know God's will? He had the Bible; but other men had the same Bible. Each of the warring sects had the Bible, worshiped the Bible, put the Bible in the place of the God who had given it.

But every sect used the Bible as a gun, its texts as bullets against the other sects. Therefore he must be his own interpreter. If he did humbly and wholly what he could understand, God would teach him whatsoever more might be needful. But no man might lawfully come between him and his conscience. No man should force him to accept what his own soul did not recognize as true. If he were obedient, God would guide him into all the truth.

III. What he claimed for himself he must concede to others. He must use no violence. He must do right, and leave results to God. He must protest against the use of force by other men.

Were not these noble, were they not Christian convictions?

With a great joy Fox received and set himself instantly to proclaim them. Doubtless he made mistakes. Doubtless at times zeal led him to see in his own conceits inspirations of the Almighty. But this is only saying that he was human.

He was hated by all sects because he would join no one of them. Imprisoned again and again; confined in dungeons so loathsome that he could not lie down because

the filth reached above his ankles; fined, whipped, imprisoned, driven from city to city; never complaining, never offering the least resistance, but proclaiming throughout England, Holland, the West Indies, America, what he believed to be the truth; now, with manacles upon his wrists, preaching to the felons among whom he was confined, or through the gratings of his cell to the crowd that gathered without, some to curse, some to jeer, but a few to believe; now rebuking Cromwell, whom no other man in England dared to face, with so much simplicity and majesty that the iron Protector, forgetting that he was the judge and Fox the culprit, dismissed him reverently as a prophet of the Most High; but never silenced, never discouraged, never saddened; with no powers of oratory, no great mental ability, so true was his message to the needs of his time that he saw converts multiply.

Soon seventy missionaries, traveling at their own charges, were diffusing his views upon the continents of Europe and America, while a far larger number, by their persistent speech, their invincible patience, and their passive endurance, tormented the powers that were at home.

The fiercer persecution grew, the faster followers came. They could not be provoked to violence; they could not be induced to seek the shelter of any sect; they could not be tempted to the least political action, but they could not be silenced, and their influence upon true men could not be prevented.

That they did foolish things no one denies. But was it more foolish for George Fox to wear a broadbrimmed hat than for Balfour of Burleigh to assassinate the Bishop of St. Andrews, for putting on a pointed one?

That the great influence of "The Friends" was due to their peculiarities is willingly conceded, because it is true. But their most remarkable peculiarities are not those which have been most frequently remarked. They did say "thee" and "thou." They refused to take oaths. They wore plain colors. They declined the sacraments. They called church buildings, "steeple-houses." But the peculiarities which distinguished them most radically from their contemporaries were the following: They first recognized the equality of women with men, for they had somewhere read that in Christ there is neither male nor female. They were the first to dis-

cover the iniquity of the slave-trade and to refuse to hold slaves, for they had read, "Ye have one Master and Lord, and all ye are brethren." They alone refused to sell liquor to the Indians, or to rob them of their lands. They were among the first to agitate for prison-reform. More than all, they so lived that even those Englishmen who had despitefully used and persecuted them, when they wished to buy a coat or a pair of shoes, sought for a Quaker tailor or a Quaker cobbler, because it was manifest to all men that Quaker tailors made coats and Quaker cobblers made shoes with the consciousness that he who in the beginning made all things, and made them with the hand that was pierced, watched every stitch they sewed, and every peg they drove, and whispered as he saw them thus clothing the naked, "inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, ye have done it unto me."

Such were some of the peculiarities by which the Friends earned their influence. George Fox had taught them to see God. There was nothing picturesque, nothing dazzling in their homely virtues and quiet endurance. There was little about them to attract a careless eye. But we could better

spare from our grounds the dahlia than the potato, the lily than the corn.

Two incidents which are reported during the lifetime of Fox may indicate by their contrast why the Friends have occupied so small a place in the romance of history.

After the Restoration, the Royalists were minded to repay some of the persecutions they had endured. It was enacted that "whosoever should preach in a conventicle under a roof, or should attend, either as preacher or hearer, a conventicle in the open air, should be punished with death and confiscation of goods."

There was terror in Scotland while Claverhouse strove to enforce this cruel edict.

Early one Sunday morning, a Scottish maiden started to attend the secret meeting of her sect, which was held in a cave. As she crossed the meadow a troop of cavalry appeared, with Claverhouse at the head. In a moment he was by her side, asking whither she went. To tell the truth would endanger the lives of her friends. If she lied she believed she would be damned. She remembered her errand, — it was to hear the Bible read. "Do not detain me. My elder brother has died. He has left a

last will and testament. I am going to hear it read, and I expect to receive a share of the inheritance."

The maiden passed on.

Not many years before, George Fox, with a few of his followers, met in a barn near Worcester for worship. That assembly also was unlawful. Before the officers sent to arrest him arrived, the meeting had ended. Fox was alone, with no evidence in sight to incriminate him. Asked why he was there, he told the exact truth and was led to prison. The graceful Scottish maiden telling dainty lies to save her soul is more picturesque. The commonplace truthfulness of the sturdy Englishman is more useful, and more uncommon. It indicates the real explanation of Quaker influence in England.

Steadily the numbers of the Friends increased. By sheer endurance they exhausted the perseverance of their persecutors, and at last were left in peace. From that moment their numbers began to diminish, their influence to wane, for their work was done.

The mission of George Fox, the man whose purity of purpose had enabled him to see God, was ended, when, a few years be-

fore his death, it became possible for every one in England to worship God without danger according to the dictates of his conscience.

When he died at London in 1690, there was probably no sect in the nation which had not felt the leaven of his influence. He was sent, not to form a new denomination, and so increase the rancors of the many already in existence, but to be the piece of sugar which sweetened the acrid cup of the nation's spiritual life by itself dissolving and passing out of sight.

XVI.

THE PEACEMAKERS.

When our Lord said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God," few of us appreciate how wonderful the prediction was.

It was no new thing for men to be called "sons of God." In the sixth chapter of Genesis we read of those who were called "sons of God." The Nile is lined with monuments to men called "sons of God." So is the Euphrates. The Greeks had many names of men called "sons of God." The emperor who ruled Rome while Christ spoke was called "a son of God." Cortez found in Mexico a monarch called "the son of God," and was himself believed to be "a son of God." Pizarro found in Peru princes called "sons of God." The North American Indians revered the memory of an ancestor called "the son of God." India and China, even Borneo and New Zealand, have traditions more or less distinct of those

who have been called "sons of God." It would be difficult, if not impossible, to find a race which has not called some one "a son of God."

But when Christ spoke, there was no place on earth where a man had been called "son of God" because he had been "a peacemaker." Men had been called "sons of God" because they had been warmakers.

The sons of God mentioned in Genesis were, we are told, the fathers of "mighty men of old, men of renoun;" that is warriors. Ramses of Egypt, Nimrod of Babylonia, Sargon of Assyria, Diomed of Greece, Cæsar of Rome, were called "sons of God" because they rode in battle-chariots and waged successful war.

The names of the days in our week are inscriptions carved on time to tell us what men counted divine before their conceptions had been changed by Jesus Christ. Sunday recalls that god of the orient who sent war, pestilence, and famine. It was not as light, but as the devastator, whose wrath must be appeased by human sacrifices, that he was chiefly worshiped. Monday reminds us not only of the north, but also of that warrior goddess whom Abraham may once have

worshiped, and whose ancient name is still preserved in her sacred mountain of sin, or Sinai. Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, tell us of deities whom men worshiped not on account of their beneficent but their destructive powers. Even Freya could preserve her title to divinity only by becoming the Venus of the north, who fired men's souls with jealousies that made them fight, and Seater, the giver of harvests, who was nothing if not beneficent, soon ceased to be worshiped at all. He never made war, therefore it did not seem possible that he could be divine.

A prediction made to-day, that the laws of gravity would sometime cease to work, would scarcely be more opposed to human experience than were the words, when Christ spoke them, "The peacemakers shall be called sons of God."

"Son of God" means "Godlike." So radically have men's conceptions of deity changed since the Sermon on the Mount was preached that we in Christendom cannot think of man or woman as divine, except in proportion as we see in them some of the qualities that make for peace. "Godlike," "divine," do not, to us, suggest war. Once

it suggested to men little else. The lady's sharp reply to Sir William Congreve expresses the general sentiment of Christendom to-day. When the inventor of the war-rocket read upon Henry Purcell's tomb, "Gone to that blessed place where only his harmony can be exceeded," she is said to have replied: "Substitute 'fireworks' for 'harmony,' and the epitaph might serve for you, Sir William." Neither Egyptian, Assyrian, Greek, nor Roman, could have understood the lady's meaning. We cannot misunderstand it, because the gods of the old world have become the devils of the new.

This revolution in human sentiment, perhaps the most radical and extensive which has ever taken place, Jesus Christ predicted before a ray of the coming dawn had appeared, as calmly and as confidently as we say, "the sun will rise to-morrow."

He himself is the supreme fulfillment of his own prediction. Wherever he is known he is called "the Son of God," because he is the peacemaker; the only one who makes peace in troubled spirits, and who shall yet make peace throughout the quarreling world. The change was brought about by the life of

Christ which was fully revealed in his death. Note when the change began.

1. We are told that the Roman captain who had charge of the crucifixion stood "over against the cross," — that is, facing Jesus and near him, when he died. The captain, we may be sure, had seen each movement, heard each word, of our Saviour, from the moment of his condemnation.

The cross was not, as the pictures misrepresent it, high in the air. Its base was raised but a foot or two above the ground. The captain's eyes were therefore nearly on a level with the Saviour's face. He saw our Lord's expression, could look into his eyes. When the man saw Jesus die, he exclaimed: "This man spoke the truth. He was the Son of God."[1]

Probably this was the first time on earth that a peacemaker had been called "the son of God" by one who represented the general thought of his time. The words were spoken by a Roman soldier; a man educated to conceive of God as Jupiter. Into this warrior's mind the dying Christ put a conception of the divine nature which accurately contradicted the conception he

[1] Alford's translation.

and the whole world had cherished to that hour.

2. When Jesus died, the watching crowd began to smite upon their breasts, and depart silently, as if in awe of the supernatural. These were they who had jeered because they said, "he called himself the Son of God, yet he cannot save himself;" cannot do war-work. They, too, had been able to see in warriors alone the sons of God. But now they begin to recognize in peacemakers the signet of divinity.

3. There were two men, who, up to the time of our Saviour's death, had played the part of splendid cowards. Both were well known. One was "an honorable counselor," the other was "a ruler of the Jews." Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea were their names. Both were members of the Sanhedrim. Probably either alone, and almost certainly both together, could have arrested the course of the conspirators who murdered Christ. Neither had dared, it seems, to interfere. Both appear to have been mastered by their fears. But when these men saw Christ die, they were changed at once into heroes. The lynxes became lions. Flinging their fears to the winds, they

went, one to Pilate, boldly asking for the body of Jesus, that he might rescue it from ignominious treatment; the other, with equal recklessness of the risk he ran, brought half a thousand dollars' worth of spices to honor the man whom the rulers of the nation had determined to disgrace. Both defied the uttermost wrath of the malignant and crafty faction before which they had quailed. With no attempt at concealment, with no sign of fear, before the eyes of the multitude who had yelled maledictions against Jesus, they bore, with every sign of reverence the case allowed, the body of the Crucified to Joseph's garden. Always when such men are changed from limp and nerveless tremblers into brave doers, it is because the consciousness of God's presence has mastered them.

An influence went forth from the dying Christ that changed the conception of deity held by every one who witnessed that death. The centurion saw Christ die, and realized that God was the opposite of the Jupiter he had been taught to worship. The jeering crowds saw Christ die, and began to smite upon their breasts in contrition. Joseph saw Christ die, and the coward became a

hero. The priests, who had bullied Pilate and moved the people to cry, "His blood be upon us and our children," if they did not see, when they heard how Christ died, suddenly grown anxious, crept timidly to the Pretorium, and begged Pilate to deliver them from they knew not what of danger, by double-sealing the sepulchre.

Upon those who first gazed on the dying Saviour his death exerted the same influence which it has steadily exerted upon all who have gazed upon it since. It has inverted the world's conceptions of glory and of shame, of divinity and of devilishness, of weakness and of power. It has substituted the cross for the crown, and compelled mankind — who from the dawn of history had called only war-makers "sons of God" — to recognize in peacemakers the children of the omnipotent.

4. There is a word used by St. Paul in a way which reveals, as by a picture, the fulfillment of Christ's prediction. It is the word "Triumph."

In the year 71 A. D., after the death of Paul, the Roman Senate decreed a triumph to the emperor Vespasian and his son Titus. These two had devastated Palestine, and

filled with unutterable anguish the soul of every Jew. Not a home, between sunny Galilee and the arid belt south of Bethlehem, which they had not made desolate. They had not only destroyed, they had obliterated, Jerusalem. They had killed 1,100,000 Jews, sent a vast number as slaves to Egypt, and brought thousands in servitude to Rome. For this the senate voted them a triumph.

The Roman soldiers flashing in armor, bearing on high the golden eagles, marched in the procession. Vehicles followed, bearing colossal pictures, painted by the first artists of the age, to represent each siege and battle in the awful campaign — the campaign which still remains, without a rival, the unique horror of history. Displayed in sight of all men were the spoils taken from the conquered; the golden candlesticks which had lighted the holy place; the golden vine to which Christ referred in the sixteenth chapter of John, with stock of gold, thick as a human thigh, bearing huge clusters of rubies, emeralds, diamonds, and sapphires; the full treasure-boxes into one of which the widow had dropped her "two mites which make a farthing."

Then came the long line of fettered pris-

oners, with Simon, the conquered leader, last. A wildering maze of women danced, scattering flowers and perfumes, and a throng of priests offered divine honors to these "sons of God," who had wrought the havoc and caused the tears advertised for all men's admiration by the gorgeous pageant. These "sons of God," seated in a gilded chariot, were drawn by war-steeds up the Capitoline Hill. There, before the doors of the temple of Jupiter, the procession halted while Simon, the brave but conquered leader, was put to death, and the populace shouted, in rapture of approval, "Vespasian and Titus, the divine ones, have triumphed."

A picture like this was the only one suggested to men's minds by the word "triumph" when St. Paul wrote, "He has triumphed in his cross." Paul, too, saw a procession. It was headed by those who sang over Bethlehem, "Peace and good-will to men." After them were born pictures which time has not been able to efface, for they remain undimmed in the Gospels; — pictures of the battles won by Christ; pictures of Mary and Martha, and Jairus and the widow of Nain, in whom he had conquered sorrow; of lepers in whom he

had conquered disease and shame; of publicans and harlots in whom he had conquered sin; of an open sepulchre in a garden where he had vanquished death. Following these, appeared, not spoils of war, but gifts received for men when he ascended up on high, leading captivity captive. Following them, a host of prisoners, whom he had led out of the prison-house, crying aloud as they move before him, "This is the Son of God." This Conqueror is not seated in a gilded chariot, but lifted upon a wooden cross. So the procession sweeps up the everlasting hills toward the Eternal City, whose walls, great and high, are thronged by an innumerable multitude, shouting, "He is worthy to receive glory and power and honor and dominion" (not because he has slain), "for he was slain, and hath redeemed us by his blood." "So by his cross making peace."

The prophecy is coming to pass. We have not yet reached the age of perfect peace. But the sentiment of Christendom regarding war has wholly changed since the cross was placed upon the crest of Calvary. Before that hour, war seemed to men the only path of glory fit for sons of God to tread.

Now all men know that war is mainly devil's business.

He who predicted this change, when to human intelligence the prediction must have seemed the wildest folly, also declared that he would establish peace on earth; that he would make peace within all of us who will receive him into our quarreling, self-tormenting spirits.

When we turn to him for instruction, all the problems which perplex us will grow plain.

XVII.

CHARLES GEORGE GORDON.

CHRIST did not say, "Blessed are they who will never fight," but "Blessed are they who make peace." Both the Old Testament and the new, fairly interpreted, teach us that times may come when men must fight in order to make peace. In his words about turning the other cheek, our Lord has given us the principle by which we may determine when such times come to us. They came often to Israel of old. The Prince of Peace was named, and was named by inspiration, after the greatest soldier his race has produced. The sentiment which weeps over anarchists and has no tears for the innocent men they mangle; which condones the sins of drunkards because it forgets the wives they batter and the children they starve; which condemns the eagles of our race for having claws, and pets the vermin reeking poison through their stings; which fails to remember that the well-beloved Son in whom

God is well pleased is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, — that sentiment is not Christian. To avoid the least concession to it, — though it was cherished by George Fox, one of the noblest of Englishmen, and is preached with eloquence by Tolstoi, the noblest of Russians, — let me show you in a warrior one of the most striking examples of a peacemaker our century has produced.

Thirty miles below London the Thames is guarded by two forts: Tilbury on the left, Gravesend on the right, bank of the river. Gravesend is not only a garrison, it is also a fashionable summer resort. A generation ago, visitors observed upon the walls and fences near the fort the following words. They had been scrawled with white chalk by the gamins of the place: —

"God bless the Kernel."

The "Kernel" was the military commandant at Gravesend. He believed that iron and gunpowder were not the strongest defenses of Great Britain, and that something more than they was essential to the safety of his country. Controlled by this conviction, he had made his house a rendezvous for the ragged urchins of the town, and for six years

had devoted all the time he could command to teaching and caring for them. When his house proved too small for this business he opened evening-schools in other buildings, all of which he superintended. He called his protégés his "kings," and, as soon as they were qualified, procured positions for them in the naval or the merchant service. Above the mantel in his private room hung a map of the world. It was stuck full of pins. These — moved from day to day — marked the courses his "kings" were sailing; showed where books and kind words might reach them, but were chiefly intended to fix in the "Kernel's" mind the locations of the boys, so that in the prayers he offered daily for each of them he might remember their special trials and temptations.

A large garden was attached to the commandant's house. A visitor inquired why it was filled with vegetables, and contained no flowers. The gardener replied: "The Colonel never eats the vegetables. He has divided the garden into lots which poor families cultivate for their own use. He never gets a thing from it!"

When invited by his peers to dine with them, the "Kernel" generally replied:

"Ask the poor and those that have nothing. Don't ask me who have enough!" The marvel is that the people took no more offense with him for saying this than we do with Christ for saying the same thing. For by accident, — such things cannot be hid, as he who inspires them "could not be hid," — it had become known that this man would not dine out because, at his home, he was entertaining the poor, the lame, the halt, and the blind; that he had refused an enormous fortune, pressed upon him by the emperor of three hundred million subjects; that he had received from the same potentate a gold medal, which conferred the highest honor in the gift of the Chinese government, and which had never been bestowed upon another foreigner; and that after effacing the inscription, so that the medal could not be recognized, he had sold it for £10 and sent the money to those suffering from famine in Manchester. People do not take offense when their invitations to dinner are declined by men like this.

A few years after his removal from Gravesend, when the "Kernel's" life was known to be in danger, special prayers for him were offered in the Greek and the

Roman Catholic churches; in the Church of England and in the churches of America, in the temples of China, and — what had never before been done for a Christian — official prayers for him were presented at the shrine of Mecca by the whole Mohammedan world. Thus the petition of the street arabs at Gravesend was repeated throughout the length and breadth of the earth. It is scarcely needful to add that "the Kernel" was General Charles George Gordon.

The key to this man's character is given in two extracts from private letters, written by him to his sister soon after he entered the Soudan. The first is this: "Praying for the people ahead of me, whom I am about to visit, gives me much strength, and it is wonderful how something seems already to have passed between us when I meet a chief for whom I have prayed. . . . I have really no troops with me" (he was surrounded by savages), "but I have the Shekinah, and I do like trusting to him and not to men."

The second extract reads: "No man ever had a harder task than I, unaided, have before me. But it sits as a feather on me. As Solomon asked, I ask, wisdom to govern

this great people, and not only will He give me it, but all else besides. And why? Because I value not the 'all besides.'"

In 1860, Gordon reached China. He was under thirty, and had already served with distinction in the corps of engineers during the Crimean war.

In 1843, occurred the shameful "opium war" against the Chinese Empire. Dr. Hamlin writes: "English cannon swept the narrow and crowded streets of seaport cities with grapeshot, and the gutters ran with blood of women and children. In one case, five thousand were sent beyond the reach of opiates in ten minutes. When peace was made, the Chinese agreed to receive the opium, to pay twenty-one millions of indemnity, to give up the priceless island of Hong Kong, and not to call the English 'barbarians' any more."

Seventeen years later, the French and English made a combined attack upon the Celestial Empire. To impress upon the Chinese an adequate appreciation of their power, they captured and pillaged Pekin, the most magnificent of Chinese cities.

For ages Pekin had been the pride of China. The gorgeous description of the

"gardens" and the "dome of pleasure," in "Kubla Khan," was suggested to Coleridge by such rumors of the place as had filtered through the obstacles which secluded it from the eyes of foreigners.

"It was a museum of all that Chinese genius had been able to achieve in porcelain and silks, in architecture, carving, engraving, jewelry, ivory, gold, silver, and precious stones, landscape gardening, and whatever else, in the course of centuries, could contribute to make a fit residence for the Son of Heaven."

Here in a lofty tower stood the water-clock which measured accurately the time consumed by Columbus in crossing the Atlantic. Here hung the bell, fourteen feet high, with thirty feet circumference of rim, nine inches thick, and weighing 120,000 pounds, on which the hours of that time were struck by a massive wooden beam moved by machinery.

The allies captured the superb city, burned, pillaged, and made it a desolation. Gordon, who was present as a subaltern officer, declared, with a heavy heart, that $20,000,000 could not nearly replace the vandal-like devastation, and that the place

was left "a scene of utter destruction which passes my powers of description." Common soldiers sold to traders, for sixteen shillings, strings of pearls, which the next day were cheaply bought up at $2500.

Amid the ashes of its capital, China was compelled to sign a humiliating treaty.

Judge, then, whether the imperial government were likely to feel kindly toward Gordon, who, though impotent to prevent it, was an officer in the army which wrought this ruin! The Chinese could not know of the grief and indignation the outrage had inspired in him.

The year which witnessed the pillage of Pekin found the Chinese government shaken by civil war, and tottering to its fall.

In 1837, a Chinaman (the first syllable of whose name was Hung,[1] and therefore by it we call him) passed the highest civil-service examinations. He was humbly born, but in China that is no barrier to political preferment. While pursuing his studies, this man had occasionally listened to Christian missionaries, had read a few tracts and portions of the Bible. During an illness, — probably caused by the strain of his examinations, — he saw a divine man whom he called his

[1] Hung-sei-tseum.

elder brother, and who taught him to slay evil spirits, going to the ends of the earth to capture them. When the Chinese mind had been goaded to desperation by foreign outrages and imperial concessions, Hung — whether he were at that time fanatic or hypocrite is immaterial — announced himself the Messiah of China, sent to establish a millennium for its people. With many fancies perverted from Christianity, and others coined in pagan mints, he proclaimed that he was the agent of the Almighty, and summoned his countrymen to follow him. His avowed purpose was to depose the regnant dynasty, which had come into power in the same way in which the Normans gained possession of England.

Thus began the notorious Tae-ping rebellion. It grew into an organized campaign of robbery and murder. In 1860, the government, weakened by the Anglo-French war, was driven to the wall. The imperial troops, scattered and besieged in a few widely separated and feebly fortified positions, dared not take the field. The rebels swept the land. The pseudo prophet had cast off all pretense of decency. He lived in a carnival of debauchery and cruelty,

while his subordinates treated the peasantry as sheep to be sheared or slaughtered.

In this strait the government sought help from the nation which was partially responsible for its desperate need. It asked for an English officer to conduct its cause. Gordon — with consent of his government — accepted the position.

In two years, with a handful of troops, — never more than 5,000, — he fought thirty-three battles and subdued the rebellion. We cannot follow his campaigns. But his victories were principally moral ones. He had first to create an army from the Falstaffian baggage which went by that name. He began by teaching his "soldiers" obedience. They would not wear uniforms, because to do so made their countrymen jeer and call them "foreign devils." They would not fight unless permitted to pillage. Soon he made them neat soldiers, and won such a reputation for honesty and justice that rebels began to desert and flock by thousands to the protection of the imperial standard, when they knew that Gordon was before them.

After the capture of Souchou the imperial commander put to death the rebel gen-

erals in defiance of the terms of their surrender. This came to Gordon's knowledge shortly before the arrival of emissaries from the government who had been sent to bring him and his soldiers presents expressing the royal gratitude. Gordon's grief and indignation were intense. The extra pay for the soldiers he accepted. But when the royal emissaries entered his presence, bearing on their heads bowls of bullion for himself, his wrath broke out, and he drove them forth with the little cane he always carried in place of a sword. Refusing the imperial gifts and actually smiting the imperial ambassadors appeared in the Chinese mind like a reversal of the laws of gravity. But Gordon wrote in reply: "Major Gordon receives the approbation of his Majesty the Emperor with every gratification, but regrets most sincerely that, owing to circumstances which have occurred since the capture of Souchou, he is unable to receive any mark of his Majesty the Emperor's recognition, and therefore respectfully begs his Majesty to receive his thanks for his intended kindness, and to allow him to decline the same." This put an end to treaty-breaking, in the imperial army.

He could quell a mutiny as promptly as he could master an emperor.

After the capture of Quinsan, which he would not permit to be plundered, he received a paper declaring that the soldiers would not march. He was convinced that the non-commissioned officers had instigated the discontent. He called them before him in presence of the whole army, and asked them who wrote the paper. They would not tell. "Very well then, every fifth man of you shall be shot." They answered with groans. He shrewdly inferred that the man who groaned loudest was the ringleader. This man was a corporal. With his own hands Gordon dragged him from the ranks and ordered two of the infantry to shoot him on the spot. It was done. The other non-commissioned officers were ordered into confinement and told that every fifth one of them would be treated in the same way, if the men did not fall in within the hour. At once the privates took their places, and thus the little army, in the presence of the enemy, was saved by the death of a single mutineer.

Even the rebels, against whom Gordon fought, loved him. A letter written by a

Tae-ping leader, after the affair of Quinsan, declares: "Often have I seen the deadly musket struck from the hand of a dastardly Englishman (tempted by love of loot to join our ranks) when he attempted, from his place of safety, to kill Gordon, who always rashly exposed himself."

When the rebellion had been crushed, the regent of China came to Sir Frederick Bruce, the English ambassador, as the latter was embarking for home, and said: "You will be astonished to see me again. . . . But we do not know what to do about Gordon. He will not receive money from us, and we have already given him every honor which it is in the power of the emperor to bestow; but as that can be of little value in his eyes, I have brought you this letter and ask you to give it to the queen of England that she may bestow upon him some reward that shall be more valuable in his eyes."

He refused millions from the Chinese treasury, returned to England so poor that he must sell the imperial medal to raise funds for charity, went on a lieutenant's pay to Gravesend, and occupied himself for six years in teaching ragged street urchins to fear God and keep his commandments.

These were his words when he turned his face homeward: "I know I leave China as poor as I entered it, but with the knowledge that through my weak instrumentality upward of eighty to a hundred thousand lives have been spared. I want no further satisfaction than this."

He was sent to India and there received a letter from the prime minister of China, stating that a war with Russia impended, and imploring him to come and resume control. Gordon asked his government for a furlough. It was refused. He resigned his commission, went instantly to China, showed the government the extreme impolicy of the contemplated war, and, when urged to become commander-in-chief, pointed out the unwisdom of trusting to foreigners like himself for generals, and drew up a paper of advice regarding the administration of army and navy, and relations with foreign powers, which Prince Li — who has been named the Bismarck of China — incorporated among the laws of the Celestial Empire.

We cannot follow Gordon back to the Danube, to South Africa, to India; nor can we describe the year in Switzerland spent nursing his sick brother, and caring for his

orphaned nephew with a father's tenderness.

South of Egypt and separated from it by a parched desert, a hundred and eight miles in breadth, lies a region which extends within two degrees of the equator, and contains some eleven million inhabitants. It is called the Soudan, or the "Land of Blacks," and was under the sovereignty of Egypt. Here European traders, under pretense of prosecuting a commerce in ivory, built up a slave-trade which became a scandal throughout Europe. Afraid to continue longer in the nefarious business, the Europeans sold out to native chiefs. These prosecuted the traffic with enormous profit. One of them, a negro named Sebehr Rahoma, gained wealth sufficient to live in the style of a sultan, on one occasion to melt $25,000 of silver coin into bullets for use against a tribe whose sorcerers had charms which were proof against lead, but not against silver.

The Soudan had been made by these petty tyrants a chaos of despair, when in 1874 Nubar Pasha, prime minister of Egypt, asked Gordon to recommend an officer who could reduce to order the distracted realm.

Gordon replied that, if his government allowed, he would go himself.

He declined the $50,000 a year offered him by Egypt and fixed his salary at one fifth of that amount, because he was unwilling to receive from a foreign government a sum larger than he was receiving from his own, and started for the Soudan. Before leaving Cairo, he wrote: "I am so glad to get away" (i. e. from the royal attentions lavished upon him); "I go alone, with an Infinite Almighty God to direct and guide me; and am glad so to trust him as to fear nothing, and, indeed, to feel sure of success."

In less than three years he reduced the savage tribes to order, and established a wholesome government in the heart of Africa.

In China he often conquered and then enlisted the same men. So in the Soudan the slavers whom he cast into prison he took into his employ as soon as he discovered in them abilities he could use.

Of cringing slaves rescued from the chained gangs he made an army in which nearly every man was ready to die for him. He awed them by magic lanterns, magnesian lights, and guns fired by electricity, while

the gunners stood a hundred yards away. He won their regard by justice and care for the poorest. His first endeavor as governor was to stop the system of barter by which the natives were continually robbed. He would give a savage for his work a certain number of beads. Then he would give him half a piaster, and *sell* him its worth in beads. Thus the native was taught to understand values as they are estimated in the markets of the world.

When criticised for wasting his time in attempts to get for an old negress her ration of tobacco, he replied: "Is not boiling her potatoes as much to an old woman as governing an empire to the queen?"

More than to his troops he trusted to his personal influence in taming and reconciling with each other the savage and warring tribes of the Soudan. He never hesitated to go among them unattended.

He had occasion to visit Abyssinia, which was furtively at war with the Khedive. Abyssinia is nominally Christian, and is said to contain more churches, monasteries, and ecclesiastics in proportion to its size and population than any other country in the world. They sing the psalms of David, but

their decalogue is peculiar to themselves. Mr. Palgrave asked one of their doctors of divinity what was the greatest sin. "Giving divine honors to a creature," was the swift reply. "What is the next greatest sin?" "Smoking tobacco."

"But what about murder and false witness?"

"God is merciful and forgiving," replied the learned ecclesiastic.

Johannis, king of Abyssinia, was accustomed to cut off the lips and noses of those found in his dominions smoking, but he issued to Gordon a special indulgence.

The king sat upon a dais. A stool had been placed upon the floor for Gordon. The latter took it up, placed it upon the dais beside the monarch, saying: "I have not come to treat with you as an inferior, but as an equal."

"Do you know, Gordon Pasha, that I can kill you?"

"Certainly! Do so if you like; I am ready."

"What! Ready to be killed?"

"Certainly! I am always ready to die. I should thank you for killing me, because that would make me far happier than I am

now, and my religion forbids me to kill myself!"

"Then my power does not terrify you!"

"Not at all."

What could his majesty do? What can any one do with a man who values not the "all besides," and for whom death has no terrors?

When Gordon left the Soudan, travelers found the people there thinking of him as of a saviour. He had checked injustice, punished crime, rewarded virtue, almost extinguished the slave-trade.

But no sooner had he departed than the same abuses, radiating from Cairo, which had produced the first chaos, returned to bring it back. A second time Gordon took the problem in hand, and at once order was restored.

He had spent a little time in Palestine, studying the geography of the Holy Land and maturing plans by which a canal might be made from the Jordan Valley to the Red Sea, and the Arabian Desert rendered fertile; studying the words of Christ and trying to make them plainer to all men, — when he was requested by Leopold of Belgium to do for the Congo what he had done for the Soudan. He accepted appointment from

Belgium, and had left London for Brussels when the English government entreated him to return to the Soudan and cope with the Mahdi. That self-styled Arabic Messiah was rapidly drawing all the Mussulmans of that region after him. All the baffled slave-trading chiefs, all who hated Egypt because they had felt her oppression, rallied to his aid. Religious fanaticism and the hereditary hatred of the Arabs for the Turks and their sultan cemented these together.

Gordon went alone, with General Stewart for secretary, but with no soldiers. The story of his last days need not be repeated. It is familiar to all who read books. You know how Khartoum was besieged by the united powers of the slave-trading chiefs; how Gordon organized from the frightened inhabitants an army which defended the place for nine months; how he was betrayed and slain. You remember the grief as for the loss of a personal friend which shrouded two continents in mourning when the news of his death came to be suspected and finally confirmed. You know how his journal closes: —

"I have done my best for my country, C. G. G."

Whether when he wrote these words he had in mind the country he was leaving or the better country to which he was going, no one knows. Nor does it matter. The words were equally true of both. For the kingdoms of the world are the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ.

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

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